Seamount $10

J. W. Spooner

SINFUL PECK

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BY

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TO

ARTHUR HENRY

SKIPPER OF THE "ISLE O' QUIRK," WHOM I HAILED IN THE DARKNESS AND WHO STOOD BY ME UNTIL MORNING, THIS BOOK IS GRATEFULLY DEDICATED

SINFUL PECK

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I

TIME had dealt kindly with Captain Jackson. There were a few deep lines in his weather-worn face and a sprinkling of silver in his hair, but he carried his "six-foot-six" of bone and muscle as erect as in youth, his stride was as springy as ever, and his gray eyes seemed to have an added keenness coming of the years. None would have thought, as he paced the poop-deck beside his seasoned second officer, that there was a difference of thirty years in their ages, even though Mr. Brown had one of those wrinkled, good-humored, quizzical faces that look the same at twenty as at fifty. Mr. Brown was thirty years old, the captain sixty.

It was about four bells of the morning watch, and the captain had risen early to observe the condition of his big ship after the first night out with an unproven crew, more than half of whom had been hoisted aboard drunk or drugged on the preceding evening, and less than half of whom might be sailors. For the new seamen's law, reducing allotment of wages to one month's pay, had just gone into effect, and coincident with its going into effect had come a strike of the sailors—or, rather, of the crimps who controlled them—to raise this one month's pay to an amount on which an honest crimp could do business —he being the favored creditor to whom the pay was allotted. On account of this strike Captain Jackson

had dealt with a "scab" crimp, an outlawed wolf of the pack, who had delivered the goods as per contract, but had not guaranteed that they were sailors.

The slovenly condition of the sails and running gear was evidence to Captain Jackson that very few of the dozen men that had made sail through the night, and who now, under a boatswain, were wearyedly drying the wet deck forward, were seamen. Nothing was taut or in place; ropes were coiled up back-handed or bunched together in heaps, and aloft top-gallant sails, royals, and sky-sails were still on the yards. As Mr. Brown had just explained, the exasperated and exhausted first mate had given it up at four in the morning, going to his berth to rest until the others of the crew were sober, when some might be found fit to be trusted aloft.

"Have to thump any o' them?" asked the captain.

"Some, sir," replied Mr. Brown. "Mr. Becker ran foul o' most of 'em, and—see that fat lobster at the wheel? Well, I jolted him in the first watch. Asked me what county I come from. Now, I'm all that's bad, but I'm not Irish. Yet he's the only sailor-man I found among 'em."

Captain Jackson turned and looked at the helmsman. He was a man past middle life, with a round, smiling countenance and well-kept mustache. He was very short of stature, but of immense girth. He stood with legs far apart, and steered the ship with an easy twirling of the wheel that bespoke familiarity with the work, but he returned the captain's stare with an assurance not easily acquired at sea.

"That man's no sailor," remarked the skipper; "he can't go aloft with that displacement."

"But he is, captain. And he's the only man who did go aloft."

As the captain studied the man's cheerful face the left eye in it closed in a deliberate wink.

"What!" roared the captain, advancing. "What's that for?"

"What's what for?" answered the helmsman, impudently, as he shifted the wheel, after a glance at the compass.

"What?" again thundered the captain. "That the way you speak to me? Hey? You say 'sir' when you answer me, or an officer. D'ye hear?"

"All right, sir. 'Sir' it is, sir," replied the unmoved sailor. "What can I do for you, sir?"

"You're a rare bird," said the astonished captain, "but you've something to learn, I see. What'd you wink at me for?"

The little man looked the big man steadily in the eye and said, softly and slowly, "To make little boys ask questions."

Obviously no self-respecting master of a two-thousand-ton ship could brook this. Captain Jackson, red in the face and choking with rage, sprang towards him with fist clinched and drawn back to strike; but he halted as the intended victim raised his hand warningly, and quietly said, "Don't strike a man at the wheel—don't you dare."

Shipboard etiquette, modified by the unseemly and quite unnecessary meddling of underwriters, has long exempted the man at the wheel from anything harsher than verbal rebuke; and Captain Jackson remembered in time. He turned to the second mate and said, sharply, "Send another man to the wheel."

"But there's not another man on deck who can steer, captain," said the officer.

"There's a whole draft o' good sailor-men in their

bunks, cappen," volunteered the helmsman, serenely. "Slept all night. Rouse 'em out."

Had the advice come from a legitimate quarter, Captain Jackson might have followed it. As it was he glared at the man for a moment, then walked forward to the break of the poop, breathing hoarsely in the effort to contain himself. The second mate tarried long enough to say to the helmsman, "You're c'mittin' suicide. Keep your tongue quiet."

But the cheerful face expanded to a reassuring smile, and Mr. Brown followed the captain, grinning in spite of himself.

"It beats me," sputtered the captain—"beats anything I ever saw—no—one crowd—in the *Almena*—" He paused, and the anger in his face gave way to an expression of moody meditation.

"The *Almena!*" said the second mate, wonderingly. "Were you aboard that ship, sir?"

"Yes, I was mate of her thirty years ago. Mr. Becker, down below, was second mate; we've held together since—off and on."

"I was a baby at the time, sir, but I've heard of that voyage in every ship I've sailed in. How was it? They took charge, didn't they?"

"Yes—at Callao. They were schooner sailors from the Lakes, but we clubbed 'em into shape on the way out. Then they got our guns at Callao, and took the ship to sea with twelve visitors—skippers and mates—aboard. They nearly killed us—made us holystone the deck and eat fo'castle grub—and hammered the daylights out of us all."

"But what became of 'em?"

"Lord knows. Hung, maybe, long ago. They turned the visitors adrift in one of the boats and took the ship around to New York—how they did it I

couldn't make out; but they navigated, somehow. Dismasted her off Hatteras, and the harbor police nabbed 'em at Quarantine. But that's the last heard of 'em. Got away from the police boat, somehow, on the way up the bay. Oh, they were a whole Sunday-school."

"Didn't the captain kill himself—or something?" asked Mr. Brown.

"No, poor devil, but might as well. Benson was a very sensitive man, and couldn't stand the ridicule. He wrecked his ship next voyage, and they say he wasn't quite himself. At any rate, he lost his grip after that. I had him mate one voyage after I got command, but he wouldn't let the stuff alone. It's twenty years since I heard of him; then he was second mate of a brigantine. No good at all."

"Funny—seems to me—that they should take the ship home instead o' beachin' her, as most mutineers do."

"Oh, they were a funny lot; thought they were within the law, merely asserting their rights as citizens; yet they were the worst outlaws that ever got together. And their nicknames fitted them. What d'you think of Seldom Helward for a name, and Big-pig Monahan, and Poopdeck Cahill, and Sinful Peck? They were the leading spirits. Then there was Moccassey Gill, and Tosser Galvin, and Ghost O'Brien, and—I've 'most forgotten them all, but I'd remember if I heard. Oh, yes, I'd remember."

The second mate grinned again and glanced aft at the helmsman, whose lips were now pursed into a pucker, as though he were whistling softly as he steered.

"What would you do, captain, if you found that same crowd in your forecastle?"

"Turn back and land 'em. Once is enough for me. But—no fear; they were young, and not long for this wicked world. By-the-way, did you search the men's dunnage?"

"No, sir, there wasn't time, and they were pretty dopy and helpless. We haven't even picked the watches."

"You took chances, nevertheless. Speak to Mr. Becker, and see to it if I forget to tell him. Get 'em out at one bell and take away all sheath-knives and whiskey. There goes seven bells."

II

THE man at the wheel had struck the bell, and while Mr. Brown stepped down the poop-ladder to call his superior the captain walked aft to the wheel. A glance at the compass showed the ship directly on her course, and he looked into the helmsman's face, which had assumed an expression of respectful gravity.

"Captain," he said, "you must pardon the seeming flippancy and irreverence in my manner and tone just now. I assure you, sir, it was due solely to the exhilarating influence of the fresh morning air, not to any disrespect—"

"What!" gasped the captain, amazed at the diction.

"I had no wish to embarrass or disconcert you, sir. And will you be kind enough, captain, to take charge of this satchel for the voyage?" He reached under the wheel-box and produced a hand-bag of costly make and material which he extended towards

the captain. "It contains my valuables, and as there is a rough crowd forward I should like it cared for. I require no receipt."

"What the— Who the devil are you? You're no sailor." Captain Jackson had mechanically taken the bag, noticing that the man's hand was as soft and white as a clergyman's.

"An able seaman, sir," he answered, proudly. "Put me through any test questions you like, sir."

"Box the compass."

"Yes, sir. Nothe, nothe and by east; nothe, nothe east; nothe—"

"That'll do. Which side does the maintop-sail halyards lead down?"

"Starboard side, sir. Fore and mizzen to port."

"You're it, all right. What d'ye mean by giving me lip?"

"My happy disposition, sir. My mother used to say—"

"Damn what your mother said. I'll give you an unhappy disposition 'fore I'm through wi' you."

Captain Jackson, carrying the hand-bag, descended to his breakfast, and when eight bells sounded, half an hour later, reappeared with his first officer, both emerging by the forward cabin door and climbing the poop-steps to the lee alley. Here they paused, the captain looking forward at the men flocking near the forecastle, Mr. Becker eying the man at the wheel with a disapproving stare which said plainly that he had just heard evil report of him. The helmsman did not wink, nor even return the stare. His own mood may have changed, but there certainly was menace in the attitude of the mate (one long arm akimbo on his hip, the other supporting his chin as he leaned against the house), and in his

scowling, sullen face, hairy almost to his eyes. He was no taller than was the helmsman, but there was little fat on his bones, and he made up for lack of height in breadth of shoulder and length of arm.

A gray-haired, decrepit, and watery-eyed man was shambling aft, followed by Mr. Brown. He climbed the steps, lowered his head in a jerky salute as he passed the captain and mate—who merely glanced at him—and went to the wheel. Here he received more attention. As Mr. Brown joined his superiors, remarking that the men forward were ugly, and that he had found trouble in getting one to relieve the wheel, the fat man, having relinquished the spokes to his successor and given him the course, was staring him in the eyes with a growing smile of delight. Then he clapped the aged wreck on his emaciated shoulders and said, jovially, "Hello, Benson! And is it really you?—you, too!"

"G'wan out o' this," whined the old man, "an' lemme 'lone. Wh' are ye, annyhow?" But the fat man was proceeding forward along the alley, chuckling as he went.

"Thought so, captain," remarked Mr. Becker, taking his elbow off the house and wheeling around. "That's Benson—old Captain Benson, o' the *Almena*. Don't you know him?"

What!" exclaimed the captain, looking aft at the new helmsman. "Yes—no, hardly—yes, it is! Sure enough. What a come-down!—here, though—wait."

The fat man was passing; the captain collared him, shook him vigorously for a few moments, then, holding him at arm's-length and marching him towards the steps kicked him solidly and viciously while he squirmed and cursed; then giving him a push and releasing him he lifted him bodily with a final kick,

over the break of the poop and down clear of the steps to the main deck. The man was too fat to be badly hurt, but he bounded to his feet and looked up with eyes blazing in anger.

"More 'n one way to skin a cat," remarked the captain, calmly. "We don't often hit the man at the wheel, but we hit other men. Take yourself forrard now and—no more o' your lip or you'll wish yourself dead 'fore long."

"Will I?" snarled the victim. "Will I? Not much—not till I've had you in jail for a while. That goes down against you, Capt'n Jackson. D'you know the new law, you purblind fool? The amendment to section forty-six hundred and eleven of the Revised Statutes says that flogging and all other forms of corporal punishment are hereby prohibited on board—"

He was interrupted. At a sign from the captain the second mate had sprung off the poop, landing on his shoulders and throwing him to the deck; then began a sequence of punchings, chokings, and cursings which did not end until the little fat man had been worried along the deck and hurled headlong among a group of the newly aroused men near the forward house. These received him with open arms —some of which arms terminated in fists—and, in a milder degree, continued the punishment. As the crew was not yet officially "turned to," and as this operation promised to require the moral influence of the combined after-guard, Mr. Brown dignifiedly turned his back on the dispute and hurried aft, finding the captain and first mate interviewing the new helmsman, who, though his bloodless body shivered under its rags in the keen March wind, yet stood erect with a

dignity born of a better past and looked his interlocutors squarely in the eyes.

"Yes, sir," he was saying as the second mate drew near; "it was that voyage that did the business for me. I never heard the last of it, and, one thing with another—bad luck and all—well, sir, here I am 'fore the mast."

"Hadn't—ahem—a—hadn't whiskey something to do with it?" inquired Captain Jackson, a little uneasily.

"Of course, capt'n; but—you were mate, not skipper, and it may not have hit you so hard. But when every crew flings it at you, when boys in the street yell at you, when your own wife laughs at you, what will you do? You'll drink, sooner or later, sir. Yes, and Mr. Becker would drink. Any man would, sir." His voice had taken on the whining tone and he dropped his glance to the compass card.

"Well, Benson—yes—well—" The captain seemed somewhat embarrassed at thus addressing his old skipper. "Wait a few days; brace up and get it out o' you, and I'll see if I can't use you aft."

"Thank ye, sir," said Benson, his watery eyes lighting; "and say, capt'n, I'm not an alarmist, but I was struck by the voice o' the man I relieved. He knew me, too, and do you know, sir, he reminded me o' Sinful Peck? 'Member him, sir?"

"Sinful Peck!—the little, sawed-off, chief devil o' them all! Why didn't I think! Of course—there's something familiar—"

The captain looked forward and saw the small fat man in the weather main rigging vociferating angrily to some one out of sight on the main deck beneath him, and the two boatswains and the cook coming hurriedly up the poop-steps, looking back as they

came. Both boatswains carried belaying-pins, and the cook—a colored brother—was picking fragments of food from his hair and clothing. And now, as though aware of coming trouble, diagnosed from the forward cabin door, the steward appeared at the after-companion with three double-barreled shotguns and three belts of cartridges, while the carpenter, with a bleeding nose, followed the cook and boatswains up the steps. The captain and two mates silently buckled on the belts handed by the steward, took a gun each, and, mounting the house, went forward to the monkey-rail, where they joined the three fugitives.

"Devil of a crowd, sir," said one of the boatswains; "can't do anything with them." Though not really disfigured, he looked the worse for wear.

"An' I nebber see such men, sah," said the cook, earnestly; "dey won't eat dey b'eakfas'. Dey frow all dat hash at me."

The carpenter, busy with his nose, made no comment.

Captain Jackson and his officers looked over the monkey-rail, on which they nonchalantly rested their guns, the muzzles slightly depressed. Clustered near the main hatch and looking aft curiously were the men who had been working forward—an unkempt and seedy muster of life's failures, the material from which the native American deep-water sailor is usually developed. Directly underneath, and looking up at the guns, the sight of which had evidently halted them, were thirteen scowling ragamuffins in all stages of disarray. A few wore greasy caps or slouch hats, the rest were bareheaded. Here and there a tightly buttoned canvas jacket masked a hiatus beneath. One man, dressed in a complete suit of washed-out oil-

skins, shivered palpably—but not in fear, as was evidenced by his red hair tinged with gray, his Roman nose, his bushy, arching eyebrows, and the threatening pose of his body, bent back and to the right with an iron belaying-pin extended at arm's length. Two men were in their stocking feet; one was without even stockings, and three others owned a boot apiece, not one a mate for any of the others. The clothing of all was greasy, tarry, patched, and fringed, most of it constructed from canvas and blankets, and not a garment among them fitting its wearer. One man, with trousers ending near his knees, was a giant as large as the captain, and, aside from his gray hair and a cast in one eye, was a perfect model of virile manhood. Others were stoop-shouldered and bent, and a few were nearly as corpulent as the man in the main rigging. All were middle-aged or elderly men, and on each face was a common expression of intelligence, resentment, and disgust.

Captain Jackson looked them over, and grew pale as he looked.

III

"OH, you're up against the real thing now," sang out the man in the rigging. "You won't mistreat Captain Jackson and Mr. Becker. Not much—not while they've got guns, you pack o' wolves."

"Now, Sinful, shut up," called the big giant; "and, Seldom"—this to the Roman-nosed man in oil-skins—"just lower that belayin'-pin. We'll talk this over with the skipper 'fore we take action. What does this mean, anyhow, Jackson?" he said, looking up at the captain.

"What does what mean?" answered the captain, slowly, ignoring the insolence in the use of his name without his title.

"Oh, you know us well enough. Why are we here, shanghaied in a bunch aboard your ship? Are you a party to it? Haven't you had enough o' this crowd?"

"Candidly, I have. I know you all, though two or three appear to be missing—in jail, I suppose. But you wouldn't have signed with me if I had been in the shipping-office, and as for being a party to shanghaiing you, if such is the case, why—well, I'd go to a hotter region for a crew first. What do you want?—to live in the cabin?"

"We want you to turn back and put us ashore," said the spokesman, firmly. "We didn't sign your articles, and you've no earthly right—"

"Yes, they did, capt'n," interrupted the man in the rigging. "Yesterday afternoon—they all signed.

They were all drunk, but they signed. Get out your articles and you'll find their names, every one."

The Roman-nosed man whirled in his tracks and sent the belaying-pin flying towards him, but it missed and went overboard.

"I haven't seen the articles since they were returned to me," answered the captain, "and I don't know who signed. I merely paid a shipping-master for twenty-five men, and he signed and delivered them —mostly drunk. If you signed my articles I am within the law in compelling you to finish the voyage. Understand that."

"They all signed, capt'n," yelled the fat man. "Get out the articles."

"Steward," said the captain, turning to that functionary, who had joined them with more arms and ammunition, "bring up the ship's articles from my desk."

"Yes, sir." The steward handed two Winchester rifles and two revolvers to the carpenter, cook, and two boatswains, and hastened below, while Captain Jackson beckoned his first mate to one side.

"It's them, all right," said the latter, with doubt and anxiety in his face. "What's to be done, sir?"

The captain looked him steadily in the eyes as though hoping to find there the answer to the embarrassing question.

"I hardly know," he said, at last. "I haven't the slightest doubt that they were shanghaied, in spite of what Sinful says. That man would swear his own mother into jail. Let's see the articles."

The steward had arrived. The captain took the folded paper from him and opened it on the monkey-rail.

"Come aft, here, all of you," he called to the

group amidships, and this dozen of men slouched towards the others. "Stand over to one side by yourselves," he added, as his eye ran down the list of names; and, when they had grouped themselves apart, "Answer to your names as I read them."

He read off twelve names distinctly, but not one was answered. All were commonplace names—some foreign, some English.

"Did you men," said the captain, addressing the dozen, "sign in this ship for the voyage to Singapore and back?"

All protested that they had not. They were drunk on the day before; they had been promised work up the State; they were hungry and had been entertained; they had been struck down in the darkness. None had been told of going in a ship, and none desired to go.

"Now for the rest," said the captain, interrupting the clamor of the dozen. "Sinful Peck?"

"Here," joyously shouted the fat man.

"Bigpig Monahan?"

"That's a name I haven't been called by for twenty years," said the giant spokesman. "What's it doing there? I didn't write it."

"Moccassey Gill?"

"Reckon that's me," said the barefooted man.

"Seldom Helward?"

The Roman-nosed man nodded as the captain glanced down at him, then turned a menacing eye on Sinful in the rigging.

"Poopdeck Cahill?"

"Here," answered one of the shirtless men, in a quiet, respectful voice. "And, captain," he added, "I don't doubt we're all down on the articles; but

will you please let us see the signatures? You'll find by testing our handwriting that we did not sign."

He climbed the poop-steps confidently and then to the top of the cabin, holding out his hand for the sheet of paper, as though the request were from one gentleman to another. His manner was compelling, and Captain Jackson yielded.

The man read in a loud voice: "Ghost O'Brien, Gunner Meagher, General Lannigan, Turkey Twain, Sorry Welch, Yampaw Gallegher, Jump Black, and Shiner O'Toole."

"Captain," he said, handing back the articles, "those are our old nicknames, but every one is forged except the first—Sinful Peck. I know the handwriting of all."

"You're a liar, Poopdeck," came from the main rigging.

A flush came to Poopdeck's face, but a smile to the captain's. It had begun as the last name was read, and possibly was aroused by the reading.

"Aren't there more of you?" he asked, good-humoredly. "Seems to me you're not all here. Who were the others? I forget."

Poopdeck thought a moment or two and said: "Senator Sands, and—let's see—Yorker Jimson. Doctor Sands is now a practicing physician in one of the Lake cities and Mr. Jimson is a clergyman in another. That is why they are not here. We all live in Cleveland."

"And how many—"

The report of a gun interrupted, and they turned in time to see Mr. Becker stagger backward, both long arms extended and his smoking shot-gun slipping from his fingers—exploding the second barrel as it struck the deck—while the iron belaying-pin

which had impacted on his forehead whirled high in air. A cry of pain rang out from the main rigging, angry and profane exclamations arose from the men on the main-deck, and the two arbitrators sprang to the monkey-rail, where the others were threatening with their guns; but the descending iron belaying-pin struck Poopdeck on the head, and he fell prone beside the unconscious first mate.

A very natural thing had happened. The irascible Seldom Helward, having expended his belaying-pin on Sinful Peck, had secured another from the pin-rail and resumed his position in the van. The equally irascible Mr. Becker had resented this display of antagonism to the extent of lowering his gun to a line with Seldom's head and scowling viciously. Then the iron club had flown, felling the officer; his trigger finger had contracted as he fell, and the charge, directed upward, had struck Sinful Peck in the rigging, and the second charge had flown harmlessly over the helmsman's head; but the first of the furious men to mount the poop-steps saw the prostrate Poopdeck, and called out, "They've shot Cahill, too. Let's kill the murdering scoundrels and be done with it!"

"Back with you!" roared the captain. "Down off my poop! Don't you come up, or we'll shoot the last man of you. I am master here. Get down!"

Counting the extra barrels of the shot-guns, there were eight steel tubes looking at the closely packed crowd in the alley and on the steps. Slowly and sullenly they backed down, and when all were on deck Seldom asked, in a voice choking with rage, "Well, what d'you want to do? Kill us all?"

"No, but we *will* kill you all if you make a display of force against me or my officers. As sailors or passengers you are under my authority, and it is

lawful to shoot you and confine you in irons for mutiny. Thirty years ago we shot five of you for this very same thing, and the law still gives us the right. Who threw that belaying-pin at the mate?"

"I did," answered Seldom.

"Come up here."

"I won't!"

The eight tubes were pointed at Seldom, and those near him, involuntarily perhaps, shrank away.

"I'll count three," said the captain. "One—"

"Oh, don't count," growled Seldom. "You've got the drop."

He ascended to the alley, and the able and efficient steward darted below and returned with handcuffs, which Mr. Brown secured on the mutineer's wrists. Then he led him aft to the lazarette and lashed him to the quarter bitt. When the officer returned Poopdeck was standing up and feeling of his head in a dazed manner, the first mate was in a sitting posture, clumsily reloading his shot-gun, and the captain was ordering the wounded Sinful assisted down from the rigging. The men obeyed this order willingly, and the subdued Sinful was soon laid out in the scuppers.

"Now, captain," said Bigpig Monahan, as he walked aft and looked up—"now that you've got Seldom in irons, suppose we ask again, What are you going to do?"

Captain Jackson made him no answer. He turned, leaving the four subordinates on guard at the monkey-rail, and joined his two mates.

"Get down on the main-deck," he said to Poopdeck; and the man obeyed. "Now, Mr. Becker," he said to the mate, who had struggled to his feet, "there is one of two things to be done: beat back to

Sandy Hook—fifty miles at least—land them and ship a new crew at an expense of over a hundred dollars and half a week's lost time, or—go on with them and break them in. What do you say? They are certainly shanghaied, and have a right to be put ashore."

"I'm game, sir," said the mate, thickly. "I'd like a little further experience with that feller that hit me."

"Mr. Brown, how do you feel? Are you willing to go out with this crew, and be ready to shoot for your life at a second's notice?—for they're not ordinary sailors. You've seen that."

"I will do as you direct, sir," answered the second mate. "And I can always get along with men who know their work."

"They know their work all right. That isn't it. I'm inclined to land them."

Captain Jackson stepped to the monkey-rail, and looked over. Bigpig and Poopdeck were conversing near the booby-hatch; their companions were clustered around the form of Sinful Peck, and the dozen shanghaied nondescripts were scattered along the starboard side of the deck from the poop-steps to the main rigging. He gave but a passing glance to these, and his eye returned to the men from Cleveland. In spite of their rags and the after-effects of drug and drink in their faces, there was yet an index of power, of confidence, of solidarity in their every attitude and gesture. There was a threat in every eye that returned his stare, and the captain turned away, walking aft with doubt and uncertainty in his face. Then his glance rested on the wasted, trembling figure of the man at the wheel, and his face hardened.

"No—no—not for me," he muttered, as he

brought the stock of his gun with a thump to the deck. He stepped to the monkey-rail. "Come aft here, the lot of you," he called. They came.

"All I know, or care to know," he said to them, "is that you are on my articles and have begun the voyage to Singapore and back to an American port. You will finish the voyage, or you will go to jail in Singapore. Take your choice. Mr. Becker—Mr. Brown," he said, turning to his officers, "turn them to, get sail on this ship and clear up the decks. When you choose watches to-night, split that crowd in half."

"Ay, ay, sir," they answered.

IV

TO Mr. Brown, steeped in the traditions of deep-water seafaring, the easy acquiescence of this shanghaied crew to the dictum of the captain was but a natural deference to armed authority.

"Do your work like men," he had said to his half of them when the watches had been picked at eight bells that evening, "and I'll treat you like men. But if you don't—if you gi' me any trouble—you'll find me a tough customer, I'll tell ye that." To which the thirteen men of his watch had made no response until Bigpig Monahan, shifting his glance from the second mate, cleared his throat and answered, "Ay, ay, sir; we can do our work."

Then they had joined in the response, and Mr. Brown had marched to his room with the peculiar jerk to the knee-joints which so well becomes an efficient and self-confident officer.

But the truculent Mr. Becker had paid no such trivial compliment to the intelligence of the men; he paid a stronger at midnight, when he sent the sleepy Mr. Brown back to his room for his revolver, enjoining upon him never to leave it out of his reach. "For ye've got a crowd," he added, "that fear neither man, God, or devil, but they do fear a gun. Show it occasionally an' use it if necessary, or some o' these nights I'll come on deck an' find ye gone."

"What's happened, Mr. Becker?" asked the second mate when he had returned with his pistol.

"Nothin'," said the mate, in a low voice, with a suspicious glance at Poopdeck, at the wheel; "but that don't mean nothin', by a long sight. They've dropped into line like the best crew there ever was, but—the skipper told ye, didn't he?"

"Yes, sir, the *Almena's* crew; but they seem to be quiet, well-behaved old men, now."

"Yes, quiet and well-behaved—just now. But did you notice them all day long—how sore their hands got? They're not used to the work lately. Lived ashore, I take it, for some time; an' they'll make trouble over this, sooner or later. The skipper's worried, but there's only one thing for you an' me to do—carry it through. We're the mates, they're the crew, an' we only know that much. Don't listen to any arguments."

"All right, sir."

"An' stand your watch on the poop. Let the bosun tend to things forrard, an' if you want me or the skipper, stamp on the deck over our heads."

"Yes, sir."

"And don't let 'em forget that you're heeled; an' don't hesitate to shoot if they make a break."

"All right, sir."

"Course east by south. Wind's haulin' to the s'uthard."

"East by south, sir."

The mate went below, and during his watch Mr. Brown found no occasion to change his estimate of the crew. The six nondescript landsmen in his watch were like all such—very much in their own and others' way; but the seven of evil repute were quite up to his description of them—quiet, well-behaved old men, intelligent and respectful, and, aside from their involuntary wincing as their inflamed hands gripped the ropes that they pulled, as efficient a watch as the hardiest of seasoned sailors. They knew the ropes, knew the calls, and even anticipated a great many of the second mate's orders.

And so he reported to the captain in the morning; but the captain so far overruled the judgment as to call the broken-down Benson aft at one bell, bathe him, clothe him from the slop-chest, then arm him, and give him instructions similar to those given Mr. Brown by Mr. Becker.

Yet, at noon, probably inspired by the sight of Mr. Benson's new clothes, the whole shivering crew, twenty-three men, without Sinful, Seldom, and the helmsman, came aft with a peaceful front, and respectfully requested Captain Jackson to sell them slops against their wages—thus indicating their present submission, at least. Captain Jackson was obliging to the extent of his power; he was glad to sell, but, not having enough of any one garment to go around, he could only deliver the store of clothing to them in a lump, chargeable against the twenty-four men as a whole, and advise them to be brotherly and share with one another. They took the clothing forward, and divided up as they could.

And so the big ship sailed over on the first leg of the long Atlantic zigzag, each day driving the right of might deeper into the hearts and brains of these men, and by the time the northeast trade was reached things were running smoothly. Mr. Benson, though testy of temper and tremulous of voice, had developed into a capable member of the after-guard, wise in his judgment of wind and weather and skilful in the planning of work; Seldom Helward, at the respectful petition of Poopdeck and Bigpig, and on his promise of good behavior, had been released from irons and placed in the port watch, and Sinful Peck had so far recovered as to be of use at light tasks with palm-and-needle.

But Sinful's cheerfulness had deserted him, and his girth was perceptibly less—the last possibly due to his melancholy, but more probably to the forecastle diet, which was not fattening. And his moodiness, too, though possibly the thoughtful habit of mind often induced by bitter experience with buckshot, was more probably due to the antagonism of his fellows. Even as they had carefully picked the last leaden globule from his tissue, and nursed him to health as they would a sick mule, so now they reviled him and cursed him as earnestly as they might the same mule when past the need of pity. Yet Sinful maintained the moral strength which, with the unwitting co-operation of Mr. Brown, made it possible later for these men to win their point.

The captain, the first and the third mate, though abating not one whit of their dignity as masters of the situation, were scrupulously careful not to provoke the crew unnecessarily. Mr. Brown, on the contrary, became a victim to his incomplete early estimate of them. He had successfully assaulted

Sinful in the beginning; later he found occasion to assault the landsman of his watch, then, dropping easily into the habit of a good second mate, he incontinently planted his fist between the shoulder-blades of Gunner Meagher one night as Gunner was passing—too slowly, in Mr. Brown's opinion—on his way to the wheel.

He admitted later that he had no real knowledge of what happened. He had not thought of using his pistol until the last glimmer of consciousness was leaving him, and when he came to his senses afterwards, flat on his back in the alley, unable to tell which part of his body hurt the most, the pistol was gone from his pocket. There were men coming towards him from the poop-steps and another from aft, evidently the man who had had the wheel. Rising unsteadily, with his hand still in his empty pocket, he saw these men halt in their tracks, and realized, dazed as he was, that his loss of the pistol was unknown to them.

"Down off the poop wi' you!" he yelled, his hand still in his pocket, and they obeyed him, the man from the wheel hurrying by him with head averted, as though fearing a blow. First assuring himself that Gunner was at the wheel, he rapped on the deck over the mate's head, and, when he appeared, explained to him. The mate listened, and called the captain and third mate. While waiting for them the two searched the alley, but found no pistol.

It was no time for recrimination: there was a loaded pistol at large, and when the captain had slipped another into the hand of the second mate they marched aft to interview the helmsman.

"Hands up!" ordered the captain, sternly, as he covered Gunner with his revolver. "Take the wheel,

Mr. Benson"; and as the third mate caught the spinning spokes Gunner meekly raised his hands. "Go through him, Mr. Becker. Get that gun, first thing."

"I have no gun, gentlemen," said Gunner, brokenly.

"Shut up! Search him well, Mr. Becker."

"No gun here, sir," answered the mate, after he had felt all around in the clothing of Gunner.

"I repeat, gentlemen, I have no gun. If, as I surmise, Mr. Brown's pistol is missing, I can only suggest that it fell from his pocket a few moments ago; but I did not see it. I fear that if I had he would not be standing erect now. I am glad that it is so. I am very sorry—for—for my unseemly rage; but I had not been struck for years—in fact, since the voyage of the *Almena*, captain—and I lost control of myself. I sincerely beg Mr. Brown's pardon."

Mr. Brown gasped. Such an attitude of mind in a sailor was beyond his experience, and they were silent while they stared at Gunner. Then the captain spoke. "What the devil are you—a prize-fighter or a preacher?"

"I am—captain—but—if you will pardon me, I prefer giving no details regarding myself."

"Take the wheel again."

V

GUNNER took the spokes from the third mate, and the party mustered in the weather alley, where they all remained, speculating on the situation, until morning. The men were not disturbed, only as they were counted and ordered to relieve the wheel and lookout in the usual way when they came aft at the change of watches; but the two men who relieved the wheel at four and six o'clock were searched for the missing pistol, and the lee alley was gone over again at daylight, to no avail. At seven bells all were called aft, and the armed after-guard scowled down on them from the top of the house. In language terse and expressive the captain explained that the pistol must be given up or there would be trouble.

"We don't know anything about that pistol, captain," said Bigpig, "and did not hear of it until Gunner came forward at eight bells. But you know us pretty well, captain—you know that if we got that gun there'd be something doing before this. I admit, candidly, that I was one of those who came aft to help Gunner. I only wish I'd laid hands on it. Gunner here is the only one who might not have used it, and he didn't get it. If he had he'd ha' given it back. That's the kind of man Gunner is, these days."

"That will do!" ordered the captain, sternly. Then he studied the upturned faces beneath him.

"Until that pistol is produced," he said at last, "you will be kept up in your afternoon watch, and you will be worked through the night watches by

lantern-light. You will also be put upon the allowance; and you know what that means—practically starvation."

Then up spoke Sinful Peck. "Which allowance do you mean, captain; the new or the old?"

"You will get your three quarts of water, your pound of beef and bread, your pea-soup and codfish; no more. Go forrard, the pack of you!" answered the captain, impatiently. But Sinful was not satisfied.

"You're quoting the old whack, captain," he said, and the law of ninety-eight has substituted a much better. If you put us on the government allowance, you'll have to give us pie—"

"That's enough!" interrupted the captain. "Go forrard!"

"It's not enough, captain. There's a new scale of provisions provided by law, and I demand it. There're four quarts of water allowed per man; there's a pound and a half of fresh bread a day, besides half a pound of hardtack and half a pound of flour. There's canned goods, and dried fruit, and pickles, and good coffee. There's a scale of provisions good enough for a longshoremen's boarding-house, and I demand it for this crew. I demand pie three times a week, for there's an allowance of an ounce of lard a day, which can't be used up except in pie-crust. And there's a penalty, Captain Jackson, of from fifty cents to a dollar a day for each man of your crew deprived of any part of this allowance."

"Shut up, you fo'castle lawyer!" said the astounded captain.

"I will not shut up!" replied Sinful, excitedly. "I have a right to speak. I have been assaulted il-

legally aboard this ship, and for that, Captain Jackson, you and your second mate shall serve from three months to two years in jail, as sure as you live to be tried. There is no alternative of fine in the amendment, which I quoted at the time. Also, captain, you will be mulcted to the tune of a hundred dollars for not providing a suitable slop-chest and a safe and warm forecastle. Both forecastles are leaky, and the doors open forward. Every sea comes in. Section forty-five hundred and seventy-two of the Revised Statutes is amended—"

"Will you shut up and get forrard?" roared the enraged captain. "Any more o' this, and I'll put you in irons!"

"So much the worse for you if you do, Captain Jackson," answered Sinful, bravely; "and right here, captain, I make a formal request for one suit of woolen clothing provided by law from the slop-chest. These thieves beside me have stolen my clothes."

A few of the "thieves"—all of whom had been regarding him with wonder—frowned sternly at him now, but most faces took on a grin. It was somewhat contagious, though Mr. Benson remained immune.

"I will consider your request and all that you have said," said the captain. "But I say to you again, Go forrard at once."

They trooped forward, and the captain and first mate went to breakfast, the former procuring a pamphlet from his room before seating himself at the table.

"I heard about this new law ashore, sir," said Mr. Becker, anxiously.

"So did I," answered the captain, turning the leaves of the pamphlet; "and if I'd expected to have

a single one o' those devils aboard I'd have looked into it. Here it is, all here. He's right—'compensation.'" He read: "'For shortage in stores'—um—'to be paid to him in addition to and to be recoverable as wages'—um—'not exceeding fifty'—Listen! 'In respect of bad quality, a sum not exceeding one dollar a day.' Let's see this new whack." He turned the leaves and read silently.

"He's right, Mr. Becker," he said, looking up. "It would run a hotel. What fools got up this scale? Why, it'll take the profits of the voyage. Here, steward!" he called; and when the steward came he said: "Look this over, and see what you make of it. How about that pie?" The steward, who had heard the petition of Sinful, took the pamphlet, and the captain began his breakfast.

"I see, captain," said the smiling steward a few moments later, "that there is plenty of fresh bread and biscuit provided, as well as the flour. Now, if there was baking-powder allowed, this flour could be expended in tea-biscuits, but without it, and with the daily allowance of lard to be used up, why, there is nothing but as the man said—pie-crust."

"Pie for sailors!" muttered the mate. "Pie!" But the captain said nothing. He remained in his room through the day, and in the last dog-watch called all hands aft.

"Men," he said to them when they had mustered at the mizzen hatch, "I find that I am caught foul on this new law"—he held the pamphlet opened in his hand as he spoke, and occasionally glanced at it—"and I am not prepared to carry out all its provisions—that is, not having the stores on board, I cannot feed you the new allowance, which is much better than the 'full-and-plenty' which I have so

far given you. The old whack which I spoke of is not to be considered, of course. Now, I mean to continue the full-and-plenty, and I mean to give you watch-and-watch, and there will be no night work except such as is necessary, or such as may be given in individual cases as punishment, although the new law says nothing about these things. I grant this of my own accord. I am satisfied by this time that Mr. Brown's pistol went overboard in the scuffle last night; also do I consider Gunner Meagher's explanation of his not having been struck of late years, and his losing control of himself. He got the best of Mr. Brown, and ought to be satisfied. I find that I, or my owners, are liable to one hundred dollars fine for not providing a suitable slop-chest, and for the faulty construction of the forecastle. This will be paid cheerfully at the end of the voyage. I find that both Mr. Brown and myself are liable to imprisonment for assault on Sinful Peck, and that I am liable to civil damages if I allow Mr. Brown to escape. I will see that he does not escape; and we will both appear for trial on the complaint of Sinful Peck. Against this I expect that you will work, faithfully and respectfully, as you have done—with the exception of Sinful Peck."

It was a manly speech; the men were certainly impressed. They looked at one another, and then Bigpig spoke.

"That is all right, captain," he said, "as far as it goes. If we are to finish the voyage the grub and the forecastle are small matters, and further assault might be met with on the spot, without waiting for the courts to act; but does the new law say anything about taking men to sea against their wishes?"

"Nothing at all; neither is it changed in regard

to mutiny, or resistance to assault. If assaulted, your redress is in the courts: resistance at sea is mutiny, and you can be shot. We will shoot you if you mutiny. And in the case of Sinful Peck, he had best understand that our punishment for assaulting him is already earned and will be no heavier if the assault is repeated. He has eaten his cake."

"We care nothing for Sinful nor his troubles, captain. He signed for the voyage; we did not. We're old men, not overfond of scrapping, and we mean to take this matter into court at the first opportunity. Just the same, you can consider that it is your being armed that induces us to this submission. We accept the situation under protest."

"Your protest will go into the official log. If you have nothing more to say, you may go forward."

They went forward, and the captain turned to his officers.

"Whether or not they have that pistol, it is the only course to take. They are intelligent men, able to make trouble. We know that well. The consul at Singapore can do nothing but order their discharge. Well, men are plenty there and wages low. If they want to stay, work them up until they are glad to desert, but treat them well until then—that is— Well, Mr. Brown, you are going to jail. I consign Sinful Peck to your care until then."

"All right, sir." And the second mate smiled.

VI

THE experiences of Sinful Peck during the rest of the passage were harrowing in the extreme. Shunned and snubbed by his shipmates, hazed and harassed by the officers—a pariah among his kind—he grew thinner and thinner as the voyage progressed, until his rather small-boned frame held nothing of fat—only a knotty covering of muscular tissue. He was the one man of the crew kept up in the afternoon watch, and, being a proficient helmsman, he did all the day steering in fine weather, his tricks on alternate days lasting from breakfast to suppertime. If there was a particularly hard or distasteful task to be done, Sinful was put to it; if there was an Irish pennant (a stray rope-yarn) hanging on a lofty stay or stretch of rigging, Sinful was sent to remove it. He was cursed and kicked by the officers—even the superannuated third mate doing his share; but the secret, dominating attitude of mind which had governed his perversity at the beginning held him together—only the fixed, sullen scowl which had come to his face showing how he suffered.

As for the other men, under the masterly influence of Bigpig and Poopdeck they did their work so well and so willingly that there was really no excuse for criticism or ill-treatment, and no apparent need for the occasional ostentatious display of weapons by the officers, or for their standing the night watches so faithfully on the poop. Though the old enemies, Seldom Helward and Mr. Becker, looked fixedly into each other's faces once in a while, as though wishing

for changed conditions, no further approach to friction occurred until the ship had rounded the Cape, sailed across the broad stretch of the Indian Ocean, through the Strait of Sunda, and up the Sumatran coast to near the entrance of Rhio Strait, where, among the flock of native craft beating out to sea, Captain Jackson made out the presence of a Singapore pilot-boat, and so informed his second mate in a voice loud enough to be heard by all. Then something occurred which shows that human nature is weak, and that fixed, dominating purpose has its limits.

Work was going on; the second mate was on the the main-deck overseeing it, and Sinful had spilled some paint on the deck. As the captain sang out the news of the coming pilot, Mr. Brown was in the act of reproving Sinful; and Bigpig Monahan, passing at the moment, stopped short and said: "That's a shame! What's the use of half killing him? I've seen enough of this. Now quit it." Then he had calmly twisted the belaying-pin from Mr. Brown's hand and dropped it. The second mate sprang away, reaching for his pistol, and Bigpig folded his big arms. Mr. Brown might or might not have used the pistol, but he was not given time. Sinful, his eyes streaming with tears that were possibly started more from Bigpig's sympathy than from his rage, drew a revolver from his pocket and shot the second mate through the leg. The officer fell to the deck.

"You will, will you!" screamed Sinful. "Drive a man to the gallows, will you! All right—here goes!"

He turned and took good aim at the captain, hurrying along the alley-way above them, but missed him. The captain turned back, evidently unarmed at this fatal moment when he needed arms; but Big-

pig, with kindling eyes, picked up the second mate's revolver and covered him.

"Come back, captain!" he called; "don't you go below! Come down here! Quick, or I'll bore you!"

The captain hesitated, while the short, blue tube in Bigpig's steady hand searched his very soul; then he came slowly forward and down the steps. And while he came Sinful's strident voice was calling:

"Down from aloft everybody. Call the watch."

The men were coming down by the running rigging and aft on the deck. One bawled into the port forecastle, and soon the watch below flocked out. Sinful tied the wrists of his wounded persecutor with the lanyard of his paint-pot, then joined Bigpig in his menace to the captain.

"Not one word, captain," said Bigpig, "or you'll be killed. We're in for it now, though a little suddenly. Submit, and you won't be harmed. Lie down on deck and put your hands behind you—Quick!"

The last word burst out like the blast of a trumpet, for the captain had begun to speak. He quietly lay down and extended his hands. The men bound him, and Bigpig found time to ask:

"Where'd you get that gun, Sinful?"

"Found it—found it on deck that night. Come on, Bigpig—come on, the rest o' you. They're asleep yet."

Forward were the two boatswains—one just aroused—the carpenter, steward, and cook looking aft at them, but displaying no hostility in their anxious faces. Mr. Becker and Mr. Benson, asleep in their berths, were wakened by cold muzzles pressed into their temples and stern voices ordering them to "Lie still." They were bound in their berths

and their doors locked. Then the men noisily returned to the deck.

"Back the main-yards, boys," sang out Bigpig, who easily assumed the direction of things. "Bring her up, Tosser," he added, to the man at the wheel. "Keep the mizzen royal just lifting."

In five minutes the ship was hove to, and Bigpig, while the crew raided the cabin for firearms, secured a deck bucket and sat down upon it, facing the conquered Captain Jackson, who had philosophically struggled to a sitting posture.

"Well, captain," he said, good-humoredly, "you see the unexpected has happened. We have charge of the ship, and she's hove to. Now which do you think she ought to do—remain hove to until that pilot comes along or turn back for New York?"

"Take the pilot, in the name of common-sense. There's jail for you all in either case."

"Not necessarily, captain. The laugh would be decidedly on you if we sailed back without touching at Singapore, and though there might be complications, there wouldn't be any jail. Do you know that this crowd can control the Cleveland Board of Trade, and could bring a pretty strong pressure on the New York Chamber of Commerce?"

Captain Jackson's face was non-committal, though his eyes opened slightly. The second mate, lying in his blood, groaned a little at this moment, and Bigpig, without rising, beckoned to the men coming out of the cabin, and called out for the steward. They carried the second mate, still bound, to his berth, and locked the steward into the room with him. For, though they had found a large armament, the steward might know of other guns.

"You made a bad mistake, captain," resumed Big-

pig, "to think that for thirty years men would remain before the mast helpless under the law. For one, I am master and managing owner of a steel steamer twice the size of this ship. I have a clear case of damages against you for taking me away from my business. Turkey Twain, who painted your hen-coop yesterday, has been two terms a mayor of a Western city. Gunner Meagher happens to own a few dollars, sent from heaven, he thinks, but inherited from an Irish uncle, I know. And"—and Bigpig grinned—"he did up your bucko second mate all right."

"Well," asked the captain, "what about Sinful Peck? He admits signing articles."

"And he did—to pay a fool bet on Bryan's election in the campaign of ninety-six. You see, the bet was that he should make a voyage with Captain Benson, if he still sailed a ship, or with you, or Mr. Becker, wherever you were. We easily found track of you through the Maritime Exchange, and had to wait two years until you struck New York; then we all—all but two—came down to make sure he sailed. He had to pay a crimp heavily to ship him, fat as he was, and paid the crimp also—that is, we think he did—to shanghai us. Sinful doped us all at a wine supper, and the crimp did the rest."

"Well, what do you want?" asked the captain. "How can we compromise this thing?"

"I don't think it'll be hard, if you're reasonable, captain. I don't suppose you'd care to sail into New York in irons, and have it get out that you had the same old *Almena* crew to handle. Do you?"

Captain Jackson slowly shook his head.

"Neither do we care to have it known that Sinful shanghaied us. We can induce him to keep quiet,

I think. Why, captain, he's one of the best lawyers in Cleveland. Cahill is a literary man, Helward is skipper of a cracker ship than mine, but the same old scrapper. Now, I think that if you'll make good the loss of our money and jewelry in New York, so that we can dress decently in Singapore, and pay our passage home on the first steamer, why—I'll have to consult the rest—but I think we can compromise. Or we can brace the yards for the back trip."

"But Sinful Peck? He shot Mr. Brown. How about him?"

"Served him right, but he'll get well. One bullet won't kill a bucko; but Sinful goes with us, of course—that is, unless he prefers to carry out his bet. He made it with Captain Helward, and there was an alternative of ten thousand dollars. How about that, Seldom?"

The men had collected around them, listening. Seldom Helward stepped forward, carrying in his hand an opened satchel. There was an ominous frown over his hooked nose and ferocious eyes.

"We can discuss that later," he said; "but here's my grip, just out of Captain Jackson's room. And all our watches and jewelry are in it, and my revolver, and yours, Monahan, and half a dozen others. Capt'n, what part had you in shanghaiing this crowd?"

"None whatever," answered the captain. "That grip was given me for safe-keeping by Sinful Peck on the first morning out."

Sinful seemed to shrink still smaller as the eyes of the whole party settled upon him.

"Then you did put up the job, after all," said Seldom to him. "You little, sawed-off shyster; I don't want your ten thousand."

"And you kept still about the second mate's gun

when you found it, Sinful," said Bigpig Monahan, with the calm severity of a magistrate. "Even that was wrong. What was your idea in the matter?"

"To take the conceit out o' you all," said Sinful, sullenly. "You flocked down to New York to laugh at me just because I hadn't ready money to pay up, and I've got the laugh on you—that's all."

"You have, have you?" said Bigpig, frowning. "Well, we have another laugh coming to us. It's up to you, Captain Helward. Shall he go home with us, or shall he finish the voyage with Jackson?"

"I said I didn't want his money. Let him pay his bet as he started to."

"Very well. Now, Captain Jackson, here's the proposition—and if any of you men"—he looked around the group—"object to any of the terms as I name them, speak out. We will turn back, captain, with you and your mates in irons, and sail back to New York, buying with drafts on your owners, any stores necessary from ships we meet; then we will fight you in the courts; or we will resume work—holding possession of our weapons—take the ship into Singapore for you and there you will discharge us all, except Sinful, and fit us out at the best tailor's with clothing sufficient for our needs, and secure us first-class passage home. You are not to prosecute, or further punish Sinful for shooting the mate, but you are to hold him and compel him to finish the voyage to an American port of discharge. In consideration of this we will mutually bind ourselves to say nothing about the whole matter. Is it agreed?"

No one had objected to the terms, and the captain studied their faces.

"What guarantee have I," he began—"what guarantee have you—"

"You are dealing with gentlemen," interrupted Poopdeck. "We assume, Captain Jackson, that when not dealing with sailors you are one also."

"I agree," said the captain. "I promise on my word."

"Cast him adrift," said Bigpig, rising. "Sinful, give up that gun and go in irons." Sinful looked wildly about him, but the circle was closing in menacingly upon him, and he meekly handed over the pistol.

"Surely," murmured Gunner Meagher, "the way of the transgressor is hard."

VII

THE captives were released from the staterooms, Sinful Peck ironed in the lazarette, the yards swung under the direction of the bewildered first mate, and the big ship, gathering way under the faintest of quartering airs, forged slowly ahead; then, as the mutineers trooped forward, Captain Jackson leaned over the taffrail and vented his pent-up rage in softly spoken but intense profanity. The mate approached.

"They took charge, Mr. Becker," said the captain, hotly, as he turned. "They had the pistol the second mate lost, and shot him with it; then they got the drop on me, and tied me down; then they tied you and the third mate in your bunks; then they raided the cabin and got everything in the shape of a firearm that I had aboard."

"They got my pistol, too," said the mate; "but—they've gone to work."

"Yes; on my promise to pay 'em off at Singapore, fit 'em out with clothes, and pay their passage home by steamer. Think o' the expense."

"To hell wi' them, capt'n; land 'em in jail for mutiny."

"That's very likely what I'll do," said the captain, sulkily; then he glanced at the listening helmsman, who, at the mention of jail, had turned a calm and reproving eye upon him. "But, you see, it's this way," he continued, raising his husky voice a little for the man's benefit: "I promised; and then, though they used to be sailors, they are now—that is, the fourteen who did the business—ship-owners and skippers and business men from Cleveland. They seem to be influential men at home."

"Yes, capt'n," came a voice from the lazarette below, "and there's where the fun comes in. Just you put the bloody-minded mutineers in jail; we'll make 'em finish the voyage, too."

"Shut up, down there," said the mate; and the voice subsided. Then the third mate appeared, his watery eyes blinking in anxiety.

"Mr. Brown's in a bad way, sir," he said to the captain. "It's risky, this hot weather. What's happened, sir? He can't talk straight."

"I forgot him!" exclaimed the captain, hurrying away.

"Mutiny, Mr. Benson," said the first mate in answer to the other's query. "Had charge for a while, and the skipper made terms with 'em. But it's mutiny, just the same, and that means jail."

The mate chuckled, and again the man at the wheel turned his reproving gaze around; then, putting his hands to his mouth, the man bawled:

"Bigpig, lay aft, here; I want to talk to you."

"Here—here!" roared the astounded first mate. "What's this—"

"That will do now—*that will do!*" interrupted the helmsman, patting the air in Mr. Becker's direction. "I believe the time is past when loud language is needed from you. Be still."

The mate glared hard at him, but subsided. Then Bigpig Monahan lifted his giant frame up the poop-steps and lumbered aft by the weather alley—another insult to the traditions of the sea—and with his hand on the butt of a pistol in his trousers pocket, and his distorted eye shifting curiously from one to the other, said to the helmsman, "What's up, Tosser?"

"Just this, Monahan. I was at the wheel, here, and didn't take a hand; so I only know what you've bargained for by what these men say. They're going to jail us all for mutiny. Better have things down in black and white."

Bigpig mused a few moments, then answered: "Reckon that's so. He gave his word of honor, all right, but then—he's only a poor, ignorant, forgetful salt-water skipper. Where is he?"

The captain emerged from the after-companion at this juncture, and Bigpig said to him: "Hear you're going to jail us for mutiny. Now, no use talking" —he raised his voice as the captain started to speak —"get out your official log and enter in it that we men are exempt from the charge of mutiny and piracy."

"If you doubt my given word," said Captain Jackson, angrily, "let me inform you that such an entry will not hold good against your names on the articles and your being in my forecastle. Under the law you are sailors or passengers."

"We are passengers."

"Then if you are passengers you cannot collect wages for the passage out, and I save that much for my owners."

"To the devil with your wages," said Bigpig, contemptuously. "Eighteen dollars a month! We wouldn't kick for clothes only to look decent while we are drawing on our home banks."

"Very well. Down it goes, and we'll all sign it."

The official log—excellent evidence in court—was produced, and in it was stated that thirteen of the ship's people, whose names were on the articles as sailors, were, to all intents and purposes, passengers assisting to take the ship into Singapore; that they were not punishable for mutiny, but were not entitled to collect wages, or other emoluments, from the ship; that Captain Jackson was to fit them out with good clothing at Singapore and pay their passage to San Francisco, and—this an after-thought of Bigpig's—pay their hotel bills and keep them supplied with moderate spending money while waiting for the banks to cash their drafts, in lieu of the wages which they relinquished. But, at the suggestion of the sceptical Mr. Becker, the captain insisted on amending the last clause to read that his liability for board and spending money should cease if the banks should refuse to honor the drafts. To this Bigpig agreed, and when the captain and the two mates had signed their names, the others came aft at his behest, and the fair white page was embellished with their euphonious cognomens.

"Now, send it down here and I'll sign," came the voice from below.

"Not much, my joker," said Bigpig, peering down on the speaker. "You're a shipped man o'

the crew, and you're not in it. All you get is the skipper's mere promise of immunity from prosecution."

"But I will say right here," said the captain, looking around, "that the glass is falling and I expect a typhoon. If we do not get in soon Mr. Brown will die for lack of medical skill, and in that case my promise will not avail. Peck will hang, and it may go hard with you all."

Their faces fell; and Bigpig looked questioningly around the group. One uttered the name, "Sinful," and their faces lightened.

"Sinful's the man," said Bigpig. "Get him up here."

"Dr. Sinful Peck," he said, sternly, a few moments later, when the released prisoner had scrambled up from the dark lazarette, "how long did you practice in the hospitals before you took up law?"

"Three years, if it's any o' your business," answered Sinful, stiffening his small frame to full height and blinking his round eyes.

"Good enough. Go down to the second mate and save his life—or hang."

"Goodness me!" murmured Sinful, squinting down the hatch. "And I was so comfortable down there. First prospect of rest this voyage, and now I must go to work again."

"No joking," said Captain Jackson. "I promised not to prosecute you, and you were only ironed on the demand of these men. But if Mr. Brown dies, you are up against the gallows. I cannot save you. If you have been a doctor, go down to the second mate. There is a medicine-chest."

"Ay, ay, sir," answered Sinful, saluting in smil-

ing, mock respect. "Takes all trades nowadays—" But they bundled him off the poop.

He called on the steward's assistance, and two hours later soberly reported to Captain Jackson that the patient was sleeping under opiates, that he had set the fracture, that the fever would probably be under control, but that the bullet could not be extracted with the appliances on board; it was a hospital job, and meanwhile Mr. Brown would need his undivided attention, though the steward could be spared to his duties. To which the captain, anxious over his barometer, gave a wearied acquiescence. Then, procuring a stool and a book from Mr. Brown's room, Sinful seated himself in the shade near the forward companion-door, within sound of his patient's breathing. And at dinner-time, after the captain and first mate had eaten, he calmly sat down to second table with the scandalized third mate, who, however, made no verbal objection; for doctors have rights at sea. But when he had again taken to his stool and book, with his pipe in full blast, and the steward had carried the news forward to the men who had surrounded a beef-kid and eaten with jack-knives and fingers, Bigpig arose, marched aft, and forcefully kicked the doctor off the stool. There was nothing said: Sinful evidently knew the futility of speech, and Bigpig was scornfully mute; but when he had gone the doctor resumed his seat and relighted his pipe. Discipline being at an end, he escaped the just criticism of his legitimate superiors.

VIII

THE air, barely moving in the morning, was still at noon, the dead stagnation only relieved by the draft from the courses as they flapped with the heave of the ship. There was a yellowish-gray appearance overhead and around, and the native craft on the horizon, with the blue rising of land to the southward, distinct in each detail at daylight, were now hidden in an impalpable haze. But by four o'clock the yellow had left the sky, leaving the gray; and across this gray from west to east moved light, feathery, cirrus clouds, while the native craft were close-hauled to an off-shore breeze that darkened the sea with short, breaking waves and increased in fitful puffs. Captain Jackson again consulted the barometer and called the thirteen aft. They came and surrounded Sinful, sitting on his stool.

"Men," he said, "there is a typhoon coming and we've got to get sea-room. You are passengers, but —will you work?"

"Most certainly, capt'n," answered Bigpig. "Just give your orders."

"Count me out, gentlemen," said Sinful, arising from his stool and turning towards the companion. "I am on special duty." He passed in, followed by withering looks.

"Very well," said the captain. "Mr. Becker, take in the royals, and get gant-lines and mast-ropes aloft to send down the upper spars, if necessary. We'll keep on this tack and shorten down only as we need."

The job used up the daylight; but it was no sooner begun than Sinful emerged with his book and pipe,

and, as they pulled and shouted aloft, he calmly smoked and turned the leaves. Once, hot and flushed from a climb to the mizzen royal and down, Seldom Helward halted before him and creased his corrugated brow into a more than usually ferocious scowl as he harshly remarked that it was a poor time to improve his mind. There were other profane and intemperate expressions of disapproval added to the remark as well; but Sinful ignored them, answering only the first, and smiling sweetly into the face of his critic.

"Never too late to improve your mind, Seldom," he said, turning the book and showing it. "Navigation. I advise you to study it. Ordinarily intelligent men don't need it on the Lakes, but you will pardon me—" Seldom, with a deeper curse on his lips, left him, and Sinful, still smiling, resumed his studies. At eight bells he climbed into the berth above his patient and went to sleep.

And as he slept through the night the men on deck, drenched with flying spindrift and chilled with the typhoon's cold, worked by sense of sound and touch for a ship which they hated and a man against whom they had mutinied, because they were sailors with the sailor's code of ethics, which considers no wage nor reward in time of stress. They hauled on wet, hard ropes against the counter-pull of invisible screaming devils aloft; and with clew-lines and buntlines fast and reef-tackles "chock-a-block," they climbed aloft in darkness black as ink to fight out the battle on slanting foot-ropes—to clutch a handful of stiffened canvas only to have it torn away, to clutch again and again—gathering in the thrashing cloths inch by inch, and holding by knees and elbows until a gasket could be passed, shouting calls of encouragement to each other against a wind which

drove the words into their throats, and conquering at last by pure perseverance, brute strength, and endurance. By midnight they had the ship, under the three lower topsails, foresail, spencer, reefed spanker, and foretopmast staysail, hove to and taking the short, vicious seas easily but drifting northeast into the China Sea, with the St. Esprit group a menace under the lee. And by this time there was an able man less—Mr. Becker had fallen down the slippery poop-steps, spraining one ankle, breaking the other. He was unable to stand erect, and they carried him to his berth. So Sinful had another patient in the morning, but neglected none the less his pipe, his stool, and his book.

At daylight sail had been further shortened by taking in the fore and mizzen topsails and reefing the foresail; but the menacing St. Esprit group, a blue blur through the spindrift, was well on the lee quarter, away from their line of drift.

"We've cleared 'em on this tack," said Captain Jackson to the third mate, as he turned his tired, salt-stained face to leeward; "but we'll have to wear soon. The Tambelaus are right in the way. Hello!" —he peered through the glasses—"there's a steamer —caught right to windward o' the St. Esprits. Look. She's steaming into it."

"Yes, sir," answered Mr. Benson, after an inspection through the glasses. "I can range her. She's goin' ashore stern first."

"Well, we can't help her. We can't help ourselves if this don't change. Just look at that now."

The captain nodded to windward.

A squall, thick with rain and the spume from truncated combers, was rushing down upon them, pressing the heaving turmoil of sea to a level, and adding

a louder note to the song of the storm. It struck the ship, and under the impact she lay over until the lee rail was buried. The two gripped the quarter-rail and sheltered their faces from the stinging fusillade, while Seldom Helward, at the wheel, scowling viciously, ground it down with all the strength of his muscular body. Then up against the wind came his explosive voice—"Why don't you take that foresail off her? Want to pull my arms out? Wheel's hard down."

The captain looked unspeakable things at Seldom, and after a moment spoke, between gritting teeth, to Mr. Benson:

"Take in the foresail. Look out for yourself on the fo'castle deck."

The officer went forward by the weather alley and Sinful Peck came aft by the lee. Sinful was clad in the long oil-skin coat and sou'wester of Mr. Brown, and held in his hand a sheet of paper.

"Well, what do you want?" asked the captain, sourly, as the little man struggled up against the wind and halted before him.

"Morning bulletin, sir," answered Sinful, backing up under the captain's arm, and carefully screening the paper. "Shall I read it, sir?"

The first violence of the squall had passed, and the seas were again lifting their heads. The fore-castle deck, where Mr. Benson had climbed to slack away the fore-tack, was a dangerous place, and the captain was watching him. The men had manned the weather clew garnet and buntlines, and the taking in of that foresail in such a furious wind promised to be an interesting spectacle, worthy of the attention of Sinful Peck; but he chose to be frivolous. With a twinkle in his eye he read:

"Mr. Brown, patient number one—slept well through the night, appetite normal, pulse ninety, temperature one hundred and one, respiration eighteen, conscience active and self-accusing—"

"Handsomely on that fore-tack," roared the captain through his hands. "Keep that leech-line taut. More beef on the 'midship buntlines."

"Bullet not yet located," continued Sinful.

"What's that?" demanded the captain, turning around.

"Morning bulletin, sir. Mr. Becker, patient number two—"

"Take it to the devil!"

"I have, sir."

Insolence from a helmsman is sometimes bearable, especially so if the helmsman be a passenger, big, and bad-tempered, with a pistol in his pocket; but insolence from a shipped man, small, of frivolous mind, and unarmed, is quite another matter. Captain Jackson reached for him and caught the shoulder of the long coat. Sinful slipped out of it, and, dodging the captain's boot, backed down the slanting deck, with a mock deprecatory smile on his face. Seldom, at the wheel, grinned exasperatingly, and the captain gave way to his rage and followed. The ship reeled and shivered as a mighty sea boarded the weather bow, and he lost his footing in front of the wheel and rolled down to the lee rail.

Picking himself up, he blindly pursued Sinful along the lee alley, down the steps, and forward along the flooded main-deck. Then his attention was attracted to his foresail, thrashing over the yard and going to pieces, and to a half-dozen men scrambling to their feet in the water, waist-deep in the lee scuppers.

"Man overboard!" gasped one—it was Bigpig,

half drowned. "It took Benson off the forecastle." Bigpig clung helplessly to the main fife-rail, too weak to do more than cough the water out of his lungs, and another demoralizing sea swept over the bow. Out of this deluge Captain Jackson mounted the lee rail at the main-rigging and scanned the waste of gray water to leeward. A yellow sou'wester showed for a moment a hundred feet away, then sank; but there was no sign of the unfortunate third mate. Another sea—the last of the usual three, and the mightiest—lifted above them and dropped aboard. It was a Niagara; it crushed in the weather side of the forward house, but left it in place; it tore men from their grips on ropes and belaying-pins, and washed them about helplessly; it surged against the lee bulwarks and rose, a moving mountain, high over the captain's head; and it wrenched him from the rigging and bore him away, struggling weakly in his tightly buttoned coat and long rubber boots.

A few saw him go, but only one was ready for action. Sinful Peck, in his shirt-sleeves, with the end of the forebrace tied in a long bowline over his shoulder, arose out of the washing water and climbed the rail. Whether or not he had prepared that bowline for the benefit of the third mate never appeared; but it was ready, and it was the salvation of Captain Jackson. With a ringing "Stand by to haul in!" he sprang overboard, and those who climbed the rail to watch saw him swimming bravely towards what seemed nothing more than a floating oil-skin coat. He reached it just as the men on deck had cleared away the last tangled coil of the forebrace, and they saw him slip the loop around the waist of the drowning captain and elevate his hand as a signal. The fourth and the following seas had not boarded the ship, and

in the comparative tranquillity resulting they hauled them to the side, where Sinful caught the main-chains and climbed aboard. Then they lifted the captain up, weak, full of water, but conscious, and some assisted him aft, while Sinful, disdainfully avoiding the hearty words and claps on his back offered by the men, made his way to his patients. But the third mate was not seen again.

"Peck, you're a man," said the captain, a little later, as he visited him in the forward companion. "But what made you—for me?"

"Dunno, capt'n. You needed a few coals of fire on your head, I think; and then, too—perhaps I had no right to guy you over the bulletin."

"Well, it's a pity there weren't more like you when the third mate went—poor devil! He's been a good man in his time, but he was old and weak. Now, I can't do much, nor say much, Peck, but I can save you some trouble. Want to be paid off, and go home with the rest?"

"Oh, no, sir. If I do I must give up ten thousand, and I can't afford it. It's a bet, you know."

"Then you'll go home in the cabin. I won't forget this in a hurry."

He offered his hand, which Sinful took, with a new and mischievous light in his eye. And when Seldom Helward, relieved from the wheel at eight bells, stopped on his way forward with an unfamiliar smile on his rugged face, and tendered him his hand and compliments, amnesty and absolution of indebtedness, Sinful declined all and waved him away.

"Want no truck with you," he declared, airily. "*I'll* make good the bet."

IX

AT mid-day, the Tambelau Islands rising high to leeward, they wore ship, standing to the south on the starboard tack, and making sail as the wind moderated, until, as darkness closed down on the still troubled waters, the ship lay in nearly the same position as at daylight, with the St. Esprit group bearing on the opposite quarter. Captain Jackson had been scanning the nest of breakers to windward of the islands while the daylight lasted, and, when he finally stowed the glasses in the companionway, he remarked to himself, or the air, but loud enough to be heard by the ever-listening helmsman, "All gone but the bows and foremast; and they're raising the flag and lowering it."

Forward, men were climbing up and down the forerigging, straining their eyes at the reef; and after supper one came aft. It was Bigpig Monahan, sacrilegiously smoking a clay pipe; and he sauntered up to the captain, who was again staring through the glasses.

"Well," said the captain, as he faced him. There was indignation in the tone; for even passengers should respect shipboard etiquette.

"People over yonder, I hear," said Bigpig, pointing with his pipe.

"I suppose so."

"When Gunner came forrard he said you saw signals."

"I did; they were running the ensign up and down; they're showing a light now." The captain again ranged his glasses.

"Well," said Bigpig, after a moment's silence.

"Well, what?"

"What are you going to do?"

"What am I going to do?" asked the captain, angrily. "What can I do?"

"Run in and take 'em off."

"It can't be done."

"It can."

"I tell you it can't, and I want no argument. I'm as willing to save life as the next man, but I'm not going to wreck my ship fooling round a reef in the night-time. How'll you get a boat over, anyhow? How'll you take men off the weather side of a hulk in this sea? And how'll you get back to the ship in the teeth of it in case you got that far?"

"We can do it—all of it. You needn't do anything but show a light. Your own life was saved to-day, when by your reasoning it could not ha' been done. Sinful's been a Lake sailor. So have the rest of us."

The captain was silent.

"We haven't talked it over," continued Bigpig. "We didn't expect opposition. I'll see what the rest say."

He went forward, and in five minutes was back, and at his heels were the dozen other troublesome malcontents—the helmsman now being one of the more expert of the landsmen.

"Is this so, Jackson," asked Poopdeck Cahill, his smooth, distinct articulation adding weight to the scorn and contempt in his voice, "that you, just out of the jaws of death yourself, refuse to save those poor wretches down there?"

"I refuse to sanction insanity," sputtered the captain. "I am duly grateful to those who pulled

me in—more than grateful to the man who went after me. But it is quite another thing to attempt this. I know it is impossible."

"You know mighty little, when you're reduced to your lowest terms," said Seldom, harshly. "You're smart enough with a crew under you that knows the work, and you're plucky enough with a handspike in your fist and a Dutchman under it. But you're the same coward who shot Monahan thirty years ago for tapping you on the nose. I've a good mind to knock your teeth down your throat on general principles, you damned educated rat." He advanced threateningly, one powerful fist clinched and drawn back.

"Steady, Helward," said Bigpig. "That's all off."

"You are all armed," said the captain, shrinking back. "I am not."

"Armed be hanged!" said Tosser Galvin, sidling around to windward of the captain. "We're not bucko mates. Take that for auld lang syne, you small-souled lobster." He struck Captain Jackson in the face. Then Seldom's fist shot out and he went down. Then, the example being set, they kicked him, struck him with fists as he attempted to rise, and unmercifully mobbed him about his own quarter-deck, unmindful of the expostulations of Bigpig, and only desisted when he lay quiet between the lee quarter bitt and the rail, with his hands shielding his face.

"Get up!" said Poopdeck, sternly. "Consider, if it suits you better, that we are paying off scores thirty years old. We had become gentlemen since then, but in your ship have reverted to type."

"And that's entirely beside the point," said Sel-

dom, as the captain painfully arose to his feet. "Consider yourself again deprived of command, and ordered to stand back and forth while we go in for those poor devils on the reef. You won't shake us —you won't dare, much as you'd like to. You'll keep the riding-light aloft, and wait for us."

The captain stared around helplessly through half-closed eyes.

"You'll pay dearly for this," he said, thickly. "I am master here under the law."

"And we are passengers," said Poopdeck. "Don't forget it."

"If you change my ship's course against my wishes, you are pirates."

"Now, that will do," said Bigpig. "We are life-savers, and we'll meet your charges in any court in the world. We're going to get two boats out and go in to that steamer; and you're to wait for us with a light up aloft. You've got a dozen other men besides the bosuns and carpenter. That's enough to wear ship. The wind's going down, and we'll be back by daylight; but you'd better not monkey with us. D'ye hear?"

The captain heard, but made no answer, and Bigpig hailed down the companion, forcefully ordering the steward to fill, trim, and light the riding-light—the large, white lantern used by ships at anchor—and hoist it to the main-truck.

Then they all trooped forward to the boats, and two—Poopdeck and Tosser—stopped on the way and interviewed Sinful Peck, working out problems in navigation on an old log slate in the second mate's room.

"Want me to go along, do you?" he said, without

looking up. "No; unless Captain Jackson orders me to I will not."

"All right, Sinful," said Poopdeck; "but we won't order you. You've done well to-day, my boy, and it goes a long way towards squaring matters between you and this crowd. We thought you'd like to be with us."

"I don't. You are ingrates and blackguards. I refuse to mix with you."

"Why, you small shyster," answered Tosser, angrily, "you only escaped the certainty of jail on our intercession with Jackson."

"Go away from me. I struck the first blow—which gave you the advantage. In return you consigned me to irons for fear I would swim ashore and escape paying my fool bet. Go away from me." They went, and he resumed his studies.

Forward, they were clearing away two of the boats on the house. When each was equipped and ready they marched aft in a body, ignoring the captain entirely, and, ordering the wheel put up, conned the ship while she ran down, with yards still braced, about a mile nearer the reef. Then they again brought to, and, as the wind and sea were unquestionably milder, even dared to back the main-yards, not only to stop headway, but to bring an overhead support for the after boat-tackles. In spite of the captain's prophecy, it was really an easy task to swing those two boats overboard, one at a time, with a man in each to unhook and to drop them back to the stern. It was done in ten minutes, and with a parting injunction to the captain to "Keep the light lit!" they swarmed down the painters, six to one boat, seven to the other, and drifted astern in the darkness.

X

CAPTAIN JACKSON watched them off, then gave the order to swing the yards—not to leave them behind, but to bring his ship more under command; for, though the wind was moderating rapidly, there was still an ugly sea heaving out of the west, and he was not far from a ragged barrier reef. He kept an eye on the riding-light at the main-truck, and at one o'clock wore around and stood to the northward, enjoining upon the lookouts to watch for the boats. He was angry, exasperated, and exhausted, yet bound by a human sympathy past his understanding not to desert those obstreperous men, weary as he, who had fought for the privilege of a night's boat work in a heavy sea and a half gale. And so, pacing the poop and watching, with one officer lost, the other two disabled, and Sinful Peck, the one man aboard able to help him, sleeping sweetly, the tired man passed the hours, and at daylight hearkened to a hail, faint as the voice of a telephone, coming up the wind from the gray blanket to leeward.

"Shift over the yard-arm tackles, Jackson," said the hail, "and overhaul one and the midship tackle down to us. Got a heavy load."

"How many?" bawled the captain.

"None! Give us the tackles!"

The main-yards were backed, and, the ship being now on the other tack, the tackles were shifted and overhauled down to one of the boats, while the other pulled to the stern and caught a line thrown by the captain.

"Got there too late," said Bigpig, as he climbed

over the taffrail. "All washed off; but we found the purser's safe—hauled out on deck. Come on, you fellows, and get it aboard."

They hurried past the captain, who looked over the stern, made sure that the boat was secure and shipping no water, and then watched the work going on forward. They had already lifted a small safe by a yard-arm tackle, and, when it was high enough, they tautened the midship tackle, slackened the other, and lowered it gently to the deck. Then they hooked on to the boat, the occupants swarmed up to the foreyard and inboard, and they lifted and stowed the boat in its place on the house as quickly and as skillfully as they had transferred the safe. By this time some had towed the second boat forward with a man in it, and when this was aboard they dragged the safe aft to the dry mizzen hatch, and Bigpig called up to the captain: "Now, we're playing out, Jackson, and mean to turn in after breakfast. You'll have to get along without us."

The captain bowed gravely. "Go ahead," he said. "I will not call you unless the ship needs you." And then, to himself, "Helyons, all, but—they're seamen."

They went below, and the captain called Sinful Peck, who had come out to inspect the safe, up to him on the poop.

"Peck," he said, "I'm dead beat, and must have some sleep. Will you watch the ship, and call me if necessary?"

"Most certainly, capt'n. Just give me the course. I'll make sail as she'll stand it, and steer the course when the wind hauls enough."

"Due west will answer until I wake up. By-the-way, what's their particular standing in Cleveland?

Can they make trouble for me in the courts? They mopped the deck with me last night, and I don't feel patient and resigned."

"They'll make no trouble, sir," said Sinful, with a smile.

"Well, I'll keep my bargain. I'm to fit them out and send them home, you know, and also pay their expenses until they can draw on their banks. I doubt, though, that the banks would deal with them unless I speak for them, and I feel mean enough to queer the whole thing."

He went down, and Sinful paced the deck thoughtfully.

Through the day, as his new duties and occasional attentions to his patients would permit, he continued his pacing and thinking, with the result that when Captain Jackson appeared, late in the afternoon, he listened to a tale—infamous enough to have emanated from a more sinful mind than Sinful Peck's—concerning the character and local reputation of the thirteen fellow-travelers; and it thoroughly impressed him. Sinful told it earnestly, as a duty deferred. He would save Captain Jackson from further extortion and blackmail, and would have spoken before had he been in a position to do so. The slander need not be detailed. It was given with a fidelity to the probable which would have secured places in the Rogues' Galleries of the world for the photographs of all.

The captain believed; and, so believing, sailed his ship into Singapore harbor, dropped anchor, and went ashore in a native sampan.

The slandered thirteen, having done their duty by the ship in assisting her into port, loafed about the deck, watching the dozen landsmen and the boat-

swains furl the canvas, and observing the changing scenery of the harbor, with its quaintly built and swiftly moving native craft, its empty wharves—for there was not a ship in port but their own—and the strange, Oriental life seething in the town on the shore. They washed up, and scoured their grimy hands with sand and bath-brick. They borrowed the carpenter's razor, and shaved, giving their sunburned faces villanous expressions by reason of the white patches developed under the three months' growth. They swore volubly at the captain's delay, and finally, talking of their prospective salvage, mustered around the safe on the mizzen hatch. A proposition to open it and forestall deception and robbery by counting its contents met with general acceptance. But it was a burglar-proof safe with a combination lock. They spoke of cold-chisels, pinch-bars, and the carpenter's broadaxe, but none would do. And there was no dynamite on board.

"Here," said Bigpig, spying the observant Sinful; "here we have it."

He collared him and led him to the safe. "Open that lock," he commanded. "You're a jack-of-all-trades."

"How can I?" said Sinful, squirming under the grip on his collar. "I don't know the combination."

"Find out. You're an expert. Get to work now, or I'll drop you overboard."

With a protesting grimace, Sinful sat down before the safe and began experimenting with the movable knob. The rest drew back, watching, and in a short time he threw open the door and arose.

"Thought you could," said Bigpig, as they advanced. "How easy old trades come back to us, eh, Sinful?" But Sinful scorned reply.

Inside the safe were closely packed piles of English bank-notes, tied up and numbered. They unloaded the whole, and counted the amounts on each wrapper as they returned it to its place. When all were packed away they stood erect with glistening eyes, and found the captain observing them, with Sinful at his side.

"Four hundred thousand dollars if there's a cent," exclaimed Bigpig, joyously, "and fully a third of it is salvage—our salvage; for I don't see how you or your crew can get any, Jackson. You forbade the job, and not a man of you did any work."

"On the contrary, Monahan," said Sinful, folding his arms with all his scant stock of dignity, "any salvage which this ship has earned will be divided among her owners, her master, and her crew. You are either mutineers, with no standing in court, or passengers, with no right to salvage."

"What!" answered Bigpig, derisively. "Do you mean to say that the men who manned boats and saved this pile will be denied a share of it?"

"I do. Since planning this voyage I read up well on marine law for my own protection. Did you ever hear of a steamship towing a disabled ship into port and sharing the salvage with her passengers? Why, you fools, we saved a big steamer from the Diamond Shoals thirty years ago. Was our claim allowed? We had to dodge policemen for a year. We were mutineers, and not even passengers. Captain Jackson, myself, and the rest of the legitimate crew here will take what salvage the owners don't get."

"You!" exclaimed several at once. "You, who slept through it all!"

"I was on special duty, and have since been

made acting first mate. I order you forrard. Go forrard, the pack of you!"

"Wait, though," said the captain to the nonplussed men. "I have just talked with the consul. There is something in the log which bears on this." He entered the cabin and returned with the official log.

"Come around me here, and listen," he said, opening the book. "As you may know," he continued when they had flocked to his side, "an entry in this log, duly witnessed by an officer, has the value of an affidavit. It is legal testimony. Here are all your signatures, my own, and two of my officers to the matter above it, which is to the effect that you are passengers, not sailors, and that you are not entitled to wages or other emoluments. Read it, all of you—*other emoluments*. That means that you are not entitled to salvage."

They read the fatal entry with blank faces.

"Well," said Bigpig, clearing his throat, "we'll see what the courts say."

"Very well; I will fight you to the last ditch and win. Had you shown any consideration for my position as master of this ship, doing my duty by my owners in forbidding what, in my judgment at the time, was an insane risk of property, I would now consider yours. But you did not scruple to assault me—unarmed as I was, and helpless—and for this you shall suffer. I will keep my agreement with you to the letter. Unless you force me, I will make no charge of mutiny against you. Here are orders on the best clothier and furnisher in Singapore"—he took a bundle of papers from his pocket—"for thirteen suits of business clothing, hats, shoes, shirts, and underwear. And here are

orders on the Hotel Flannigan for board, lodging, and one English shilling a day spending money for each of you until the banks have cashed your drafts or refused to honor them. And here are thirteen steamer tickets."

"A shilling a day?" said one. "Why, that won't buy drinks!"

"There is no amount specified—only 'moderate spending money,' and that is moderate."

"Very," said Poopdeck, dryly; "as moderate as you are, captain. And what kind of a hotel is the Hotel Flannigan?"

"A sailors' boarding-house; but it is a licensed hotel."

They looked at him with scowling faces, and an outbreak began; but Bigpig silenced it by raising his hand.

"All right, Jackson. We know you better now, and there's no use in any more talk. We'll take the whole thing into court, and show you up, if nothing more."

They went ashore in the same boats which took the safe and the injured mates, and disappeared from the knowledge of Sinful, who moved his goods into the first mate's room, and took up his duties in discharging cargo. A month later, when ballast had been taken in for Manila, the captain came aboard one evening with an amused expression on his face, which also held a little of anxiety.

"They're in a tight hole," he explained to Sinful. "They were so sure of their salvage that they decided to wait and get it, not knowing that the case won't be settled for a year. Their shilling a day didn't last long, nor their welcome at Flannigan's; for the banks were suspicious—the consul warned

them, you see, telling them the pedigree you gave of them—and they sold their clothes and their guns and tickets to get money to eat. They've practically starved. Flannigan told me he would ha' kept 'em in the usual way against their advance money, only there are no ships in port. Everything has been corralled by the government for transports and colliers. And for the same reason, there are no sailors—all jumped to the Philippines. Hot times there now. I can't find a man, and that's why I listened to 'em."

"Did you ship them?" asked Sinful, eagerly.

"Be aboard in the morning. Signed 'em 'fore the consul. Are you up on navigation?"

"Pretty much, now."

"Well, Mr. Brown and Mr. Becker won't be ready, and I'll have to leave 'em. I found a second mate ashore, and you can sign on first, if you like, for the run to Manila."

"Thank you, sir. I will, with pleasure."

And the little man leaned back against the rail shaking with laughter, while tears of happiness streamed down his cheeks.

XI

HE was a huge, loose-jointed, and big-fisted man-and-brother, with a countenance positively beautiful in its picturesque ugliness. It was a shade or two darker than coal, deeply pitted with pock-marks, and held a strange combination of good-humor and ferocity. Over the gleaming eyes was a perpetual scowl, but the thick lips seldom hid the yellow teeth within, and his moist and expansive smile was nearly as fixed as his scowl. One front tooth was gone, and through the aperture, even when his smile was largest, he could whistle a spirited music of quite a good quality; and as he whistled, his feet, large and heavily shod, would shuffle spasmodically, as though in repressed sympathy with the music. He came off to the ship in time for breakfast and, carrying his dunnage in one hand, climbed a single rope and scrambled over the rail with an agility seldom displayed by men of his size; then, squinting aloft with seamanly scrutiny, he advanced to the captain, who had emerged from the forward companion.

"I'se come aboard, Cappen Jackson," he said, smiling benignly.

"So I see, Mr. Johnson," answered the captain; "and I see you've brought the articles of war with you." He glanced at a pistol and a pair of brass knuckles strapped to the outside of the heavy satchel in the hand of the other.

"Yes, sah, I allus pack 'em outside when I join a new ship, sah. Shows de men wha' dey gwine to get

'f dey doan' watch out." His smile grew in dimensions.

"Well, that's all right, and I need a second mate like you; for I've got a crowd forrard that'll take 'em away from you and jam them down your throat if *you* don't watch out. But you might as well start right, as you only go to Manila with us. There's a new law passed this year which forbids all forms of assault and also makes me liable for damages in case I permit the escape of an officer who is liable to arrest. So, don't touch a man here unless in self-defense."

"Why—how, cappen," asked the second mate, in wonder—"how you gwine to keep men at work 'less you t'ump 'em round a bit?"

"The Lord knows," answered the captain, a shade of anxiety clouding his face. "Twelve o' my men'll stand anything. They're dock-rats and hoboes shanghaied out o' New York, and have just learned to get out o' their own way. The rest are a baker's dozen o' Lake sailors, old men now, but able and intelligent, seamen to the last man-jack o' them, and regular helyons if you rouse 'em. Mr. Peck was one o' them, but he saved my life outside, and I took him aft as acting mate until the other two get out o' the hospital. By-the-way, are you a navigator?"

"No, sah, but I'se a whole second mate."

"Well, we'll get along, no doubt—but I want to tell you about these men, so you'll know what you're up against. They took charge outside here, and tied us all down; then they threatened to sail the ship back to New York unless I agreed to pay them off at Singapore and send 'em home like gentlemen. Well, I agreed, and did my part; but they chose

to wait around Singapore to get a salvage job settled in court, went broke, starved a while, and yesterday signed with me again, as there were no other ships in port for them and no other sailors for me. So, there you are. They'll come aboard much disgruntled, I s'pose, but if you're a little careful with 'em there may be no trouble. Don't stir them up needlessly."

"No, sah, not 'less dey needs it," said the negro, beaming joyously. "Jess de same, sah, I nebber seen no crowd dat could down me."

"Well, I've warned you. Here's Mr. Peck—Sinful Peck they called him forrard. He's a rare little man in his way. He can show you your room, and I'll go ashore for the men."

Sinful Peck came out of the cabin, waddling a little in his walk from a growing rotundity due, no doubt, to late immunity from manual labor and to the excellence of the cabin fare, but rather unbecoming to one of his short stature. His round, cheerful face lit up in surprise as he viewed the negro; but he accepted the introduction gracefully, and when the captain had descended the side to a waiting sampan, he led him to his room, and then to breakfast. He watched him a few moments while he rolled up his shirt-sleeves, squared himself at the table, and began shovelling in the remnants of the breakfast with a table-spoon, then, with a grimace of disgust, he returned to the deck.

"Might as well be 'fore the mast with the crowd," he muttered, "as aft with that pig. 'Mister Johnson'—well, I'll be ——." He leaned against the rail and his face grew thoughtful. "And yet, what's wrong with him? Muscular, massive, ferocious—the incarnation of American buckoism, brute

strength, seamanship, ignorance, and stupidity. Great Scott, what development! He could shut his hand on any of the crowd—and they punched and kicked and insulted me all the way out. Let's think. What'd the skipper ship that brute for? Can I use 'Mistah Johnsing' in my business?"

Long and earnestly he mused, looking abstractedly at the men forward enjoying their post-breakfast smoke, and when the tinkle of eight bells sounded from the cabin clock a smile had come to his face and a mischievous twinkle to his eye; but as he started forward to turn the men to he felt a grip on his collar; then, wriggling and choking, he was lifted from the deck, at the end of the negro's long, powerful arm.

"Le' go," he gasped. "Le' go o' me. What's this for?"

"Dat's all right, Mister Peck," said the negro. "I jess want to 'press you wi' my quality 'fore I turn to. I allus makes first mates understand at de beginning dat I'se a mons'ous strong man and won't stand no foolin'. So, you see? Dah." He gave Sinful a shake.

But Sinful, though fat, was agile. He twisted suddenly in midair, doubled one short leg, and planted his foot on the negro's face; then he exerted his strength and landed on his back a few feet away, while the astonished assailant staggered back, rubbing some deep scratches on his face. But he smiled approvingly at his angry superior.

"By golly, Misser Peck," he said, "but you's a smart man. Nobody nebber kicked me in de face before. Hol' on, don' shoot, Misser Peck."

Sinful, with blazing eyes, had arisen with a drawn revolver and covered him.

"Don't you ever dare to lay your hands on me again," he stormed, "or I'll lay you dead on the deck. What do you mean by it?"

"It's all right, Misser Peck. Put de gun down. I'se got one in my pocket, too, but I don' want to use it. I shot a first mate in Savannah one time, an' I had to go to chokey. It took six p'licemen, by golly."

"It won't need but one and a wheelbarrow if you touch me again." Sinful lowered the pistol. "What did you do it for?"

"Jess to show you, Misser Peck, dat I'se de right kind of a second mate for you. De cappen says dey's a mighty bad crowd o' men comin'!"

"Oh—yes—that's so." Sinful pocketed the pistol, but watched cautiously as he continued. "There are thirteen more—all scrappers. You'll have enough to do to protect yourself without impressing me with your strength. Bigpig Monahan can do you up in one round."

"He can?" said the negro, his eyes gleaming. "Did he say so?"

"No, but you'll know him. He's down on all colored men. He's got a cro'-jack eye and a mild way o' talking, but look out."

"Is he de wussest o' de gang, sah?"

"Almost. There's Seldom Helward—hooked nose, bicycle face, red hair turning gray. Look out for him. Tosser Galvin is another bad one. He's a big, beefy fellow—looks like a butcher. These three love a fight, but the others'll drop in when it's started."

"Yay—yah-ya-ha," laughed the second mate, shuffling his feet and waving his long arms in the air. "Dat's de kind o' men I jess love. But say, Misser Peck, ain't dem funny names?"

"They've all got 'em. There's Poopdeck Cahill, and there's Gunner Meagher, and Ghost O'Brien, Yampaw Gallegher, Turkey Twain, Sorry Welch, Shiner O'Toole, Senator Sands, Jump Black, and Moccassey Gill. Now, go forward and start the men to work. Get that water-laid hawser out of the 'tween deck and coil it 'longside the fore hatch; and, by-the-way, those are good-tempered, willing men forward, there. They don't need thumping."

"Ay, ay, sah; I'll wait for de bad ones," answered the negro, turning away; "but say, Misser Peck," he added coming back, with doubt in his face. "De cappen he say somethin' 'bout a new law dat you mus' not hit a sailor. How 'bout dat?"

"Oh, there's a fool law passed," said Sinful, airily, "but it can't be enforced. Even though you should be arrested when you get to port, all you need is to demand a jury trial and get a change of venue; then by the time the case is called the witnesses'll be all off to sea again. Can't convict you without witnesses, you know."

"Is dat so, now? By golly, you'se a mighty smart man, Misser Peck. How you learn all dis?"

"I've been a lawyer in my time. Don't be alarmed. I'll see you clear of all proceedings, but I expect you to help me keep this crew down."

"Yes, sah. I'll do that, sah. And so you been a lawyer, has you? Well, I stand by you, and you stand by me."

"It begins to look," muttered Sinful, as his brother officer went forward, "like hot times for the crowd. Bigpig won't be a lunch for him. But I've got to keep the nigger clear. I'll read up a bit."

He went to his room, searched it well, and emerging, with a puzzled face, went forward and searched

an empty bunk in the forecastle. Then he directed the men to find and return to him a law-book which he must have left behind when he moved his dunnage out of the forecastle.

"Haven't seen it," he said, "since the first o' the passage out. So it must be forward." The men promised to find it; but by the time the hawser was on deck a tug had steamed up to the quarter, and their services were required in making her fast. Then Captain Jackson climbed aboard, followed by thirteen gloomy-faced men in seedy disarray—their clothing wrinkled, soiled, and sprinkled with slivers, as though from sleeping too close to mother earth and undressed planking—and the interest aroused by their coming was enough to drive thought of the missing book from all minds, including Sinful's. None had any bedding or extra clothing, but each possessed a large and lively sense of injury; for, as Sinful joined them, with his dark confrère, they stared at him sullenly, hungrily, and enviously, as though his sleek, well-fed little body was both an affront and a temptation.

XII

"MUSTER up around me here," said the captain, sternly, as he stepped upon the mizzen hatch. "I want a few words with you." They flocked around him and he continued: "Before you join your shipmates forrard I want you to know that this ship will be run strictly in accordance to the new seaman's law. The ship is seaworthy; the forecastle has been repaired and is warm and dry; the complement of men is full; I have laid in full store of the provisions named in the scale, and a complete outfit of slop-clothing, on which you can draw unless under punishment; I have forbidden my officers to strike any of you, but if one of you strikes an officer that man may be shot dead as a mutineer. The law is unchanged in that regard. You may also be lawfully shot if you resist going in irons as a punishment for insubordination. Your working and sleeping hours are not prescribed by the law, and are left to the discretion of your officers, depending on your conduct. You will find me fair, in spite of the trouble you have made me; but I shall allow no pistols or sheath-knives among you. Turn your pockets inside out—all of you."

Silently and sullenly they obeyed the command. Every pocket in every garment was pulled out in plain sight. All were empty.

"That will do. Mr. Peck, have you anything to say to them?"

"Yes, sir—thank you, captain—I have. I want to say to this gang of ruffians, who maltreated me while before the mast, that I am heart and soul in

accord with the spirit of the new law—particularly as regards the shooting of mutineers. I want to call Mr. Johnson's attention to the four leading spirits, so that he will know them. Mr. Johnson"—he turned to the listening second mate, who stepped eagerly to his side—"see that big, wall-eyed hoodlum squinting at me? That is Bigpig Monahan, who thinks he can fight." The negro smiled and nodded. "That hang-dog tough behind him is Seldom Helward—a good citizen only when in jail. Beside him is Tosser Galvin, who can toss in more whiskey without paying for it than any man in Cleveland. And the sneaky-looking scoundrel over here, with the look of a pickpocket in one eye and a barkeep in the other, is Poopdeck Cahill. Look out for these four, Mr. Johnson."

Poopdeck's fine features reddened in anger, and he said to the captain: "May we say a word or two, unofficially, sir, to Mr. Peck, before we begin?" The captain nodded consent.

"Sinful," said Poopdeck, "when you drugged us, your guests at a parting supper, and shanghaied us aboard this ship in which you were bound to sail by the terms of your bet with Helward, you perpetrated what was a practical joke to you, but a wrong involving thousands of dollars' loss to us. For this we hammered you well in the forecastle; but when clear of the ship at Singapore we were willing to call it square. You, however, chose to carry it on. You so prejudiced Captain Jackson with lies as to our standing at home that he in turn prejudiced the consul, and we found every door, and every ear, in Singapore closed to us. The banks would not deal with us, and, unable to get our drafts honored, we suffered privation until com-

pelled to sign in this ship in which fortune has made you the first mate, with power of life and death under the law. We have resolved to do our work and obey the law, but if you abuse your power over us, remember that you have thirteen implacable enemies who will make no appeal to law, but will, when the time comes, punish you with physical pain that will make you wish for death."

"And I'll say," said Seldom Helward, hoarsely, when Poopdeck had paused for breath, "that you needn't abuse your power to hear from me again. I've camped on your trail, my joker, and don't leave it till I hunt you out o' Cleveland, or into jail—or hell."

To the credit of Sinful's sensibilities be it said that he fidgeted visibly under Poopdeck's denunciation and paled at Seldom's threat; but before he could reply the captain spoke:

"This will do," he said, firmly. "You are threatening. Go forward. Mr. Peck, man the windlass and pass the line to the tug."

"Wait a minute, capt'n, if you please," said Bigpig Monahan, as the group separated. "Is this Senegambian going out second mate?"

"Mr. Johnson is second mate of this ship until Mr. Brown joins us at Manila. Mr. Peck is first mate until Mr. Becker comes."

"Very well, sir. Mr. Johnson has been looking at me like a dog at a bone for the last few minutes, and I think he's taken a fancy to me. Now, Seldom's all right, though a little outspoken, and I can answer for him and the rest of us that we'll do our work willingly, having signed willingly; but it's up to you, captain, to keep your man Friday off our backs."

It may have been the epithets or it may have been an encouraging nudge from Sinful's elbow that roused Mr. Johnson to action—or it may possibly have been his officer-like indignation at the captain's complaisant manner towards these impudent men. He sprang into the air with an incoherent yell, arms and legs at all angles, and came down close to the startled Bigpig. But Bigpig was not too startled to parry the outshot fist of the negro and return with a crashing blow in the face which momentarily stopped him, but only increased his rage. Bellowing almost inarticulate profanity, the negro thrust his right hand into his pocket, drew it forth brass-shod, and again charged on Bigpig—as large a man as he, fully as skilled and courageous, but much older and slower in his movements. Then they fought furiously, Bigpig quiet and cool, the negro in a frenzy, while the men sprang to the rail and secured belaying-pins, and the captain, with drawn revolver, thundered at them to " Put them back." But he did not shoot, and they did not obey him; they circled about the giant antagonists, shouting words of encouragement to Bigpig and threatening curses to the negro, but before there was a chance to strike a blow, youth and brass knuckles prevailed over age and stiffness, and Bigpig went down senseless under a crashing blow that laid open his forehead. Sinful Peck, pale and anxious of face, had sprung up the poop steps with his pistol ready, and the captain now followed; for with Bigpig disposed of, the infuriated negro turned to the others. None there could face him as long as had Bigpig, and few could remain within reach of those long, powerful arms for the second of time necessary to strike a blow. The negro sprang, dodged, whirled, struck—and

as he struck a man went down—and when at last it became apparent to his excited faculties that he was actually winning against them all, his mouthings became intelligible.

"Forrard wi' you," he howled, as he pursued them around the deck. "You heah what de cappen say, you lazy, good-f'nothin' sogers. Go forrard, I tole you, and pass de tow-line. Wha' you t'ink, hey? You gwine to hab you' own way heah? Not much, I tole you."

Slowly they gave way, and with a man occasionally falling under his blows he fought them forward, until, dropping their useless belaying-pins, they grabbed the tow-line at his behest, with the frightened noncombatants of the crew, and passed the end up to the bows. He had "turned them to."

XIII

FLUSHED and jubilant, the victor came aft, passing two men still and bleeding on the deck, and four dazed ones zigzagging painfully out of his path, and halted beside the unconscious Bigpig, over whom now stood the captain and Sinful.

"You haven't killed him, Mr. Johnson," said the latter, with a composed smile, "but better leave off your gloves next time."

"Give me those things," demanded the captain, sternly. Mr. Johnson, with surprise and doubt in his face, took off the brass knuckles and handed them to him. He tossed them overboard.

"You can do all I require of you here," he said, "without manslaughter."

"Why, sah, he hit me fust," answered the negro, in an injured tone; "an' den dey all jump on me, sah."

"Yes, I know—he hit you first. I saw that. But remember what I told you. Keep clear o' the law."

Sinful had slipped away to the other unconscious ones, and now reported: "All alike, sir. Broken skin, but nothing serious. They'll come to soon."

"Take them forrard, pass the tow-line, and man the windlass."

In passing the tow-line to the tug, and getting the anchor to the bows, Sinful, whose place was on the forecastle deck among the men, stood well up into the knight-heads with his hand continually in his pocket. The men must have known that that hand was closed on a pistol butt. They worked well in spite of their hurts, sullenly but respectfully,

and only Seldom saw fit to forget his place. When he had climbed over the bow, and stood on the anchor-stock to pass the ring-stopper, he turned his battered visage upward to the diminutive first mate, and said, slowly, through still bleeding lips: "This counts heavily against you, you little viper. I saw you start the nigger a-going."

But Sinful ignored the speech entirely.

Mr. Johnson struck them no more that day, satisfying himself with jocular comments on their inferiority and exasperating praise of himself, which the men listened to without answer. But in the long passage over to Manila, which, from the rather early breaking-up of the southwest monsoon, the consequent gale, and succeeding baffling northeast monsoon, consumed nearly a month, he found many occasions on which forcibly to assert his dominion. What the captain thought of this useless maltreating of willing men found no expression in his speech or manner. Discipline must be maintained, in spite of unwise legislation. What Sinful thought may be judged of by his merciless working of the men in their watch below, and frequent assurance of support and encouragement in answer to the negro's sometimes doubtful queries in regard to the power of the law; for he candidly conceded that he feared jail. But the moral influence of Sinful sufficed to keep alive his drooping courage, and when the anchor dropped in Manila Bay, every man forward—even the unoffending boatswains and the dozen landsmen—bore on his face or body unhealed scars and blue contusions. And with the ship moored and the canvas furled, Bigpig Monahan came aft, with others at his heels, and respectfully asked the captain for liberty.

"No," said the captain, "you will get no liberty in this port."

"I demand it, sir, to make complaint against your second mate. I have a right to see the authorities."

"You have the right to demand to see the consul in a foreign port, but this is now an American colonial port, and I believe under martial law."

"The Revised Statutes give seamen the right to liberty and one-half their money at any port touched, Capt'n Jackson."

"On the ship's articles there is a clause reading: 'No money or shore-leave at Manila, except at master's option.' You have signed away your right. Go to your work."

The captain turned away, and Bigpig, almost black in the face, went forward with the others. The captain soon left the ship in a short boat, and late in the day, just after the passing of a quartermaster's tug, towing a lighter out to the naval fleet at Cavité, Bigpig was missed. Neither returned to the ship that night, but in the morning the shore boat approached with the captain; and with him in the stern-sheets were two other men whom Sinful examined carefully with the glasses.

"A good chance for complications here, Mr. Johnson," he said, as he laid down the glasses. "Here are our predecessors."

"Our what, sah?"

"The two mates we left in the hospital at Singapore—Mr. Becker and Mr. Brown. You get your discharge here, I believe, but the question is, who's mate of this ship?"

"You is, sah, but I goes ashore. Is you sure, Misser Peck, what you say, dat I can't be 'rested

fo' t'umpin' de men? Wha' you t'ink dat Bigpig's gone to?"

"Don't know and don't care. I've troubles of my own."

"But you tole me, sah, dat you'd stan' by me, an' not let me be 'rested. Didn't you? You tole me dat." Sinful had turned away, and the negro was following him, but the little man only answered, irritably: "Fight your own battles, and let me alone."

He went down the poop-steps to receive the party at the gangway, and the second mate followed slowly, the aggrieved look which had come to his face giving way to one of malevolent resentment.

The three climbed aboard, the visitors carrying their dunnage, as though they had come to stay, and the captain said, gayly: "Here we are again—all of us together. They're a little limpy yet, Mr. Peck, but still in the ring. How is everything?"

The two had stared disdainfully at Sinful, and he returned the stare with interest before answering the captain. Then he said: "Bigpig Monahan has disappeared, sir. Don't know how."

"Why didn't you watch him? Now, my hands are tied. Come up on the poop, all of you." They followed him up the steps. "It's this way," he continued, when they had reached the open space abaft the cabin. "He openly demanded permission to complain to the authorities, and I heard his demand before witnesses. So, I am liable for the safe delivery of Mr. Johnson if he is wanted. I can't let you leave the ship, Mr. Johnson, until I am sure you are not wanted."

"Is I gwine to be 'rested, sah?" asked the negro, anxiously.

"I don't know. If they want you I shall give you up, for I warned you to keep within the law, and I cannot stand civil damages on account of your escape."

"But Misser Peck," said the negro, turning to the sober-faced Sinful, "Misser Peck he tole me it was all right; didn't you, sah?"

"I told you that it would be difficult to convict. It is an after-consideration," said Sinful angrily. "Don't appeal to me; I can't prevent your arrest."

"Isn't this Monahan coming now, Mr. Becker?" said one of the new-comers softly to the other, pointing astern. Mr. Becker looked.

"That's him, sure enough. Look there, Capt'n Jackson."

XIV

THEY all looked. Bigpig was coming in state, seated under an awning in the after cock-pit of a large, white steam-launch, in the forward end of which were men dressed in the white working ducks of the American navy and the yellow khaki of the army. There were six of these last, and they carried rifles with murderous sword-bayonets, and cartridge-belts supporting heavy revolvers. Beside Bigpig, chatting affably with him, was a portly, gray-moustached man dressed in immaculate white and gold—a naval officer. The launch steamed to the gangway, and the officer, Bigpig, and the six soldiers climbed aboard. The party on the poop descended to receive them, and Mr. Johnson hurried into his room.

"Are you Captain Jackson?" asked the officer,

after his eyes had wandered over the group and settled on the big skipper.

"I am, sir."

"Is this one of your crew?" He nodded towards Bigpig, who looked damp and disheveled, but happy, and the captain affirmed that he was.

"He swam aboard the flagship from a passing lighter last night, and told a story of brutal treatment of seamen which aroused the admiral's attention and interest. I am captain of the port, and he has ordered me to devote my personal service to this case. Have you a negro second mate named Johnson on board?"

"I will produce him," said the captain, stepping to the companion. "Mr. Johnson," he called. "Come out. You are wanted."

Mr. Johnson came out with alacrity. His smile had become a ferocious grin, his scowl was deeper than usual, and his eyes held the desperate, murderous light of a fear-haunted animal. In his right hand was a long knife, and as he passed the captain he buried this in his shoulder; then, as the captain sank down groaning, he made for Sinful Peck. Sinful fled along the deck, and the men forward, who had dropped their tasks to watch the proceedings, scattered out of their way.

"Shoot him," roared the officer. "He has done murder. Aim—fire!"

The six soldiers sank to one knee; six rifle-barrels were elevated and six bullets followed the frenzied negro, now roaring incoherent threats at Sinful for "gwine back on him."

He floundered heavily to the deck at Sinful's heels, and the outstretched knife slit a long gash in his right trousers leg. The bullets were just in time,

but Sinful did not pause in his flight until he had circled the forward house; then, spying the huge black form of his pursuer quiet in a growing pool on the deck, he slowed down and approached with what dignity he could assume the group surrounding the wounded captain.

"We must get him ashore at once," said the officer, "or he will bleed to death. Who is next in command here?"

"I am, sir," answered both Mr. Becker and Sinful.

"Two first mates? That's funny; but lift the captain over quickly."

All the men had come aft now, and some, as the groaning and almost unconscious captain was picked up, volunteered the information that the negro was dead.

"He deserved it," said the officer, "and under martial law it is the quickest solution of the trouble. Are you satisfied, Monahan?"

"Yes, sir," answered Bigpig, soberly. "But there's another matter which you may be able to settle for us, sir. The question you just asked: Who is first mate of this ship?"

"Well, who is?" The officer looked at the two claimants, and then at the wounded captain descending the side in the arms of the men.

"I am the signed first mate, sir," said Mr. Becker. "I came out to Singapore in her, and went to the hospital, with the understanding that I was to join the ship by steamer at Manila. I have done so."

"And you?" inquired the officer, turning to Sinful.

"I was promoted to be first mate in this man's place at Singapore," said Sinful, "and have been first mate since."

"I am still on the articles as first mate," said Mr. Becker, "and this man shipped as sailor out o' New York."

"Well, I don't know," said the puzzled officer. "As captain of the port I must leave some one in charge pending the captain's recovery; but—I cannot replace you," he said to Mr. Becker, "without deposing this man. Can't you get along until the captain can decide?"

"I am the lawful first mate, sir," said Mr. Becker, doggedly, "and as such I will exercise my power if I stay here."

"Excuse me, sir," said Bigpig, respectfully, "but the new seaman's law provides that all first mates of sailing crafts of over seven hundred tons register shall show certificates, as in English craft. Here is the law, sir—the latest Revised Statutes." He received a book handed him by Poopdeck Cahill, who had drawn close to him, and opened it, pointing to a certain part of a page.

"My book!" exclaimed Sinful. "How did you get it?"

"Found it, my son," said Bigpig, benignly, "in the forecastle."

"I know," said the officer, after a glance at the page. "I read up that new law lately. Are you certified, sir?" he asked of Mr. Becker.

Mr. Becker triumphantly drew forth a pocket-book and displayed an engraved sheet of paper.

"Renewed last March, sir," he said; "and it's an ocean steamboat license—first class—twenty years old."

"That covers the ground," said the officer, after examining it. "And you?" he asked of Sinful.

"I have been master of Lake steamers. I am a

first-class pilot on the Lakes, and I have a drawer full of those licenses at home."

"But they are of no use to you out here," said the officer, stiffening up. "I cannot wait longer, as the captain is in danger. Your name, sir?" he asked of the rightful incumbent.

"John Becker, sir."

"I appoint you acting master of this ship until Captain Jackson recovers. Attention!" he called to his soldiers. "Over the side—march!"

He halted at the gangway to glance at the corpse of the negro. "Better box him up at once," he said, "and I'll send a lighter to take him ashore." Then he was gone.

"Steward," called Mr. Becker to this functionary, who stood in the cabin door. "Clean up my room, and if this man has any traps in it fire 'em out on deck. Go forrard out o' this," he said, sternly, to the white-faced Sinful.

"We'll take him, sir," said Bigpig, with a joyous smile. "Come, Sinful, my boy." He hooked his big arm within Sinful's little one, Poopdeck Cahill took the other one, and with Seldom Helward bringing up the rear and the whole crew flocking ahead, the procession moved forward.

XV

DURING the noon hour a steam-launch towing a casco, or native lighter, crept up the gangway, deposited a white-clad officer and two soldiers on the ladder, then pulled the casco forward to the main chains, where her crew made her fast. The officer and soldiers climbed aboard, and Mr. Becker, called from his dinner by the watching steward at the forward companion, came out wiping his mouth.

"I'm an inspector of customs," said the officer. "I suppose you know that Manila is under martial law. Who is in charge of this ship? I'm after a dead nigger, for one thing; and I want a look at your papers."

"I'm in charge, sir," answered Mr. Becker; "I signed first mate and am acting skipper while Captain Jackson's in the hospital. How's he getting on, sir? Have you heard?"

"Badly cut. How'd it happen? I only know that our men shot the nigger after he knifed the captain."

"Went daft and run amuck. Y'see, me an' Mr. Brown, the second mate, went to the hospital at Singapore, an' the skipper took on one o' the hands forrard first mate in my place, an' shipped the moke second mate for the run here. Well, they hazed the men some, it seems, though the nigger did all the thumpin', and one o' the crew got away last night an' made complaint. We only got here yesterday from Singapore, an' joined the ship this mornin', but just after we got aboard out comes the captain o' the port wi' some sogers to 'rest the

nigger. Course, the skipper had to give him up, an' then he turned loose with his knife, an' the sogers shot him. There he is." Mr. Becker pointed to an elongated object covered with canvas on the main hatch. The officer glanced, and nodded, then said: "What became of the first mate? Did he make trouble?"

"Not in any violent way," answered Mr. Becker, with a grin. "Tried to hold his berth against me, but the port cap'n overruled him, an' reinstated me. I put him 'fore the mast 'mong the men he'd been hazin'. Reckon that's his yap now. Listen."

From the forecastle came sounds of hoarse, muffled, denunciatory voices, rising and falling; occasionally a higher note broke in—a quavering, angry voice which, as they listened, grew louder, and finally dominated the others.

"Seems to have an interesting time," said the officer, dryly.

"Yes," answered Mr. Becker, still grinning. "He's among his own breed o' dog, but they've outlawed him. Sinful Peck, they call him. He's got money, and shipped out o' New York on a bet."

The quavering voice ceased coincident with a sound as of a bucket striking a bulkhead; there was an outburst of the hoarse tones, and then the little man shot out of the forecastle door, followed by a flying beef-bone which just missed his head and went overboard.

"That's him," said Mr. Becker. "That's the only Sinful Peck, the worst little devil for his draft that ever happened. Been a sailor an' a lawyer and a doctor, they say. Shot the second mate outside o' Singapore, an' then nursed him like a son. When I broke my leg he pulled me through. Skipper

went overboard on a big sea, an' Sinful went after him. That's why he was taken aft."

"He nursed you, do you say, and saved the captain's life? Yet you reduce him as soon as you get charge."

"Why not? He shipped 'fore the mast. I don't need him aft."

"Let me see the ship's papers," said the officer, coldly.

"I'll get 'em. Not much on 'em, I reckon, as the ship's in ballast."

"Wait," said the officer, as Mr. Becker turned to enter the cabin. "That man is coming. I am interested in him."

The little man was marching aft with a business-like stride, and behind him men were flocking out of the two forecastle doors and watching him. Whatever of anger might have been in his face when forward had left it as he approached the mate and the officers. He smiled sweetly, but it was an incongruous, out-of-place sort of smile, considering other ornaments to his face. His bald head was covered with tar, as though he had been crowned with an inverted and full-charged tar-bucket, and black, sticky rivulets ran down his cheeks and under his shirt collar. His nose was swollen and bleeding, and mixed with the blood was the half-fluid grease called "slush" aboard ship. He worked his lips and spat continually, as though from the intrusion of some of this grease into his mouth, and there was a perceptible limp to his business-like stride, which spoke of recent contact with something hard and swift. Mr. Becker scowled as he halted before them, but the officer smiled encouragingly, and said: "You are Mr. Sinful Peck, I hear."

"Yes, sir. That's the name I'm known by aboard this hell-ship. Mr. Becker," he said to the mate, "will you permit me to speak to this gentleman in your august presence?"

The scowling Mr. Becker made no answer, and Sinful continued: "You are a government officer, sir?"

"Lieutenant Seward, Sixth Artillery—inspector of customs."

"I am ex-first mate of this ship. Here is my successor and predecessor, who forgets that I am ex-officio entitled to consideration, and has thrown me to the dogs. I cannot write a letter, as I have no stationery, and know better than to ask for it; but will you kindly inform Captain Jackson of my predicament, sir, when you see him?"

"Most certainly—when he is in condition to hear of it; but I am informed that he is very low—too low to be disturbed."

"Of course—of course, lieutenant. Only when he is in condition to attend to the matter. I can drag my chain until then, I hope, but in case I fail—what is the penalty for murder under martial law? I am student of civil and international law, but not of martial. I am a pearl cast before swine. What will happen if I kill a pig or a bucko mate?"

"You will be shot," answered the officer, with an amused smile.

"Thank you, sir. I shall remember. Mr. Becker," he said to the mate, "have no fear of me. You are a poor, ignorant man, and you knew no better. I shall not kill you until we get to America."

"Well, I want none o' yer lip," declared Mr. Becker, angrily, advancing towards him.

"Steady as you go, sir," answered Sinful, backing

away, with hands uplifted. "If you touch me you'll get mussed; and you look fine in that clean shirt, Mr. Becker—ought to wear a clean shirt every day, sir."

"I needn't touch you, damn you," snarled the exasperated officer, springing to the rail and extracting a belaying-pin.

"Wait," said the lieutenant, blocking his way. "You are not going to assault that man for good-humored joking."

"I'll break his damned head," sputtered Mr. Becker. But he halted.

"You will not be permitted. Manila is under martial law, which is quick and severe. Men," said the lieutenant to the two privates, who had remained near the gangway, "your duty will be not only to see that no contraband goods are smuggled out of this ship, but that there is no assault of seamen by officers. If an officer strikes a man except in self-defense, put him under arrest and notify me."

"Yes, sir," they answered, saluting, and looking hard at Mr. Becker, who put the belaying-pin back and faced Mr. Seward in a white heat.

"Yes—that's all right, for the army or the navy," he said, "with the power o' the government behind you; but how'll a man manage aboard these ships with the crews we get? Here's Mr. Brown here"—the second mate had just come out of the cabin door—"an' me, all alone wi' twenty-five men to handle an' keep at work. Every man of 'em ready to mutiny at any time."

"And they did mutiny," broke in the second mate, who had easily surmised the situation; "outside Singapore. They took charge o' the ship for a while, and this man shot me." He pointed at Sinful.

"And then nursed you, I hear," said the lieutenant, dryly.

"Look at 'em forrard, there," stormed the angry first mate; "that baker's dozen by the galley door. See that big tough with the cro'-jack eye? That's Bigpig Monahan, the ringleader o' the lot. See that hang-dog mug beside him? That's Seldom Helward, ready for murder at any time. What d'ye think o' men wi' them names? There's Tosser Galvin, scratchin' himself. Think them men'll listen to reason?"

"Mr. Becker is right, lieutenant," said Sinful. "Their names alone condemn them. There are Poop-deck Cahill, and Turkey Twain, Ghost O'Brien, Gunner Meagher—it would pain you to hear them all, sir. They are town-mates of mine, to my shame and confusion; but Mr. Becker is right; they will not listen to reason. Not a brute among them can be insulted unless the insult is physical. They have so insulted me. They are dock-rats and river thieves from Cleveland."

"An' you're the worst thief among 'em, I'll bet," growled the mate.

"Thank you, sir," answered Sinful, straightening up, a ridiculous figure of mock dignity; "but I cannot argue that with you. I am come aft for relief from the medicine-chest. While saving your leg from amputation I learned of its contents. There is croton oil there, which will assuage the pain in my own leg, where a splinter of bone has been kicked off by a sea-boot. May I have the croton oil, sir?"

A little of shame and embarrassment came to the angry face of the mate, and when he observed the cold but questioning gaze of the lieutenant fixed upon him, he growled: "Go ahead, and be damned to you."

Sinful leaped into the cabin, and in a few minutes returned with a large, flat bottle. He nodded a cheery "good-morning" to the lieutenant, and was about to pass forward when he saw the "bakra's dozen" of men leave their place near the galley, and march aft in a body. There was purpose in their rugged, intelligent faces, though but little index of the turpitude credited them by Sinful and the mate, and they approached as though they had something to say on it. Sinful halted, and then edged over towards the two soldiers.

XVI

"MR. BECKER," said the big "ringleader," respectfully, "it isn't quite one bell yet. May we speak to this officer 'fore we turn to?"

The mate nodded a surly consent, and he turned to the officer.

"My name's Monahan, sir—"

"Biggig Monahan," interrupted Sinful.

"Biggig it is, my son, but don't interrupt. Can you tell us, sir, if the banks ashore are doing business with the home banks now?"

"No," said the lieutenant. "There's a military government in force, and all foreign business is at a standstill."

"No way, then, sir, by which we can draw money on our home banks? This crowd could bench issues and buy a fleet of ships like this, but we're helpless, unless we can communicate with our bankers in Cheapland. We merely want our discharge from this ship and our pay for it, but we've signed articles and the

skipper refused liberty yesterday. Now he's in the hospital. We want to go home by steamer—not 'fore the mast in a sailing ship. Would an appeal to the admiral be of use, sir?"

"Decidedly, no. If you signed articles he would not interfere without the captain's knowledge and consent. And he is too near death to be troubled. No one can discharge you except your captain, when he recovers—that is, unless you have cause for complaint worthy of the Provost Court's attention. Have you any grievance?"

"None this side of Singapore, sir—now that the nigger is dead, and we have this little devil 'fore the mast with us. The two mates have just joined, and haven't shown their teeth yet. If they begin, how shall we get a complaint ashore, sir?"

"They will not begin. These two men whom I will leave here will prevent it."

"There'll be no trouble of our starting; we want to keep clean records. But there'll be no way of our knowing just when the skipper can listen to our proposition. Will you be kind enough to put it to him, sir, whenever he gets well enough? Say that we'll make good the pay of thirteen new men for the run home, and that we don't want any money from him—only our discharges. Our interests at home are suffering."

"Do you think he will believe that you can do it?"

"He can make sure by cabling, sir. We had no money for that at Singapore, and we can't get ashore here, and are just as poor. But at home I'm a shipowner and master, while there are several here wealthier than I."

"If you are wealthy men," asked the officer, look-

ing at the innocent though dirty face of Sinful, "how do you happen to be here? This man gives you a different standing."

"They're not wealthy, lieutenant," said Sinful, earnestly. "They know every free lunch in Cleveland, but they can't even buy drinks."

"This man," said Bigpig, hotly, "is a liar. The story might as well come out. We're sick o' this ship. He made a fool bet a few years back on Bryan's election—which was, to make a deep-water voyage if he lost. He made the bet with Seldom—Captain Helward at home—and we all came down to see him off. Just 'fore going aboard he gave us a parting wine supper, drugged us all, and had us shanghaied by the crimp that shipped him. It's one of his damned practical jokes, but it's costing him something. Look at him."

Mr. Seward laughed, and said: "It does seem to be going hard with him. Well, I am to tell the captain for him that he is disrated, and I will state your proposition to him, as soon as possible. There are plenty of men in port, and I can see no reason why he should hold you. But you cannot land in Manila unless in perfect health. The quarantine is very strict, and the slightest symptom of contagious disease will bar you out."

"We're all right, sir," they exclaimed, noisily.

One bell tinkled from the cabin clock, and the mate growled: "Turn to. Mr. Brown, rig a tackle to the main-yard and lift that stiff over. And take off the main hatch so that this inspector o' customs an' sailors' dry-nurse can look into the hold. I'll get the ship's papers."

The lieutenant's face flushed as he looked at the retreating figure of the mate, and he said to the two

soldiers: "Watch that man carefully, and lock him up if he gives you the slightest excuse."

"Yes, sir," answered one, "we will; but how about the men? They seem to be abusing that little fellow."

"The men," said the officer, in a musing tone. "Their case is beyond my intervention; and the little fellow seems to be able to take care of himself. But don't let them kill him."

"Something doing now, sir," said the other soldier, looking forward, and the lieutenant followed his glance. There were men on the main hatch bundling up the elongated object in its canvas covering; and the others were carrying aloft a heavy tackle with which to lift it; but the rest of the crew —not yet set to work—were watching Mr. Brown and Sinful Peck, who were holding a heated argument near the windlass. Sinful held in one hand a "slush-bucket," from which, with the other hand, he had scooped some grease and plastered the tar on his bald head, his object, of course, being the softening of the tar for easy removal. But he was doing it in working-hours, and Mr. Brown, who had not heard the lieutenant's orders forbidding assault, was very properly incensed. Sinful's voice of protest could not be heard plainly, but Mr. Brown's was loud, profane, and emphatic, the burden of his criticism, however, referring as much to Sinful's handiness with a gun as to his bad manners in making his toilet after one bell. As they looked, the second mate's fist shot out and the little man went down; then Mr. Brown began kicking the small victim in the ribs, methodically and rhythmically.

"Stop that!" roared the lieutenant, starting forward. "Arrest that man!" he called back to the

two privates, and they followed, shipping their bayonets as they ran. Mr. Brown was interrupted by two sharp steel points pressing his sides; then, as he started back, the rifles were crossed between him and his victim.

"Take him over the side, and send him ashore to the provost marshal-general," said Mr. Seward, sternly.

"What's this for?" asked the astonished second mate. "Why—why—he shot me—shot me with my own pistol!"

"He must have been a poor marksman, to hit your leg. Over the side with him, men." And Mr. Brown, expostulating loudly as he went, was marched aft to the main rigging and compelled to climb down to the waiting casco.

Sinful scrambled painfully to his feet, and, with his nose bleeding afresh, limped after the lieutenant and asked:

"Can you take me along as prosecuting witness, sir?"

"Not needed in Provost Court. I am witness enough," said the lieutenant, without halting; and Sinful returned to his toilet. This time he was permitted to finish, even to bandaging his leg.

The tackle was rigged and the body swinging in mid-air by this time, and as the enraged lieutenant reached the gangway and met Mr. Becker with the ship's papers, it was lowered to the casco, where the corporal's guard that had received Mr. Brown laid it out on the deck and unhooked the tackle.

Mr. Seward examined the papers, peeped down the opened hatches at the ballast in the lower hold, then, handing back the papers to the mate, turned

to the gangway, but halted at the steps and called back:

"I am taking the second mate ashore under arrest for assaulting one of the sailors. If you duplicate his offense you will receive summary treatment. Men," he said to the soldiers, "you are to see to this." Then he went over the side, and the soldiers explained what had happened. Mr. Becker climbed to the poop, peered down at his brother officer, seated disconsolately on a box, surrounded by soldiers, and at the officer under the awning of the steam-launch, which was now making fast to the casco; then, mopping his hairy face with his coat-sleeve, came down and looked blankly at the soldiers.

"Well, I'll be hanged," he said. "What am I to do now—alone here with this crew o' men?"

"Try treating them decently," answered one. "Such work would spoil the best company in the army. You heard our orders? Well, we'll carry them out."

XVII

MR. BECKER did not answer. Whether he was most oppressed by his isolation among unfriendly men, or by the menace of martial law, could not be surmised by his new attitude towards the crew. He became a model merchant officer, quiet, dignified, and civil-spoken, and that afternoon kept them at light, easy tasks calculated to win the regard of the most mutinous of sailors. Even was he kind to Sinful Peck, which so emboldened the little man that, when work was done for the day, he came aft and requested—the ship being in port—free access to the fresh-water tanks for the men he had been thrown among.

"Guess yer talkin' for yerself more'n them, aren't you?" growled the mate.

"For myself entirely, sir," answered Sinful. "The weather is warm, and the forecastle poorly ventilated. Some are complaining of prickly heat, and it may be the dhobie's itch. Perhaps they would wash if the example were set."

"You need a bath yerself. Go ahead and set the example."

Salt "slush," though an excellent solvent for sticky tar, is not a cosmetic of the first order, and Sinful's appearance really attested his own urgent need of what he prescribed for the others. The mate ordered the carpenter to unlock the deck-tanks, and sent a box of soap forward by the steward—a benefaction so unprecedented that the men openly debited their shares on the slop-chest account. But the gift was acceptable, and for half an hour

in the gathering darkness the forward deck was a natatorium. Then it became a laundry, and until far into the night men washed, rinsed and hung up shirts and underwear to dry in the rigging. But the soldier on watch noticed that Sinful Peck was the only one of the fourteen men from Cleveland who washed clothes. The others had turned in after their bath, and when he called his comrade at midnight to relieve him, he reported that Sinful was still at it.

The sleepy soldier strolled forward. Sinful was sitting on the forehatch beside a large pile of damp clothes, with a bucket between his knees, industriously washing away. Bigpig Monahan stood behind him on the hatch, twirling in his hand a piece of rope, and as the soldier drew near he was saying:

"It pains me, my son, to rope's-end you; but you've got to finish the crowd's wash, and we're giving you three nights to do it. By the time you've rinsed out that pile it'll be two bells, and you can turn in; and to-morrow night you can go on with more, but every man on anchor-watch gets this rope with instructions to use it if you shirk. Now, I'll call Seldom. You'd better not monkey with him."

Bigpig entered the forecastle, and the soldier said to Sinful: "This seems to be compulsory; but we're ordered not to interfere with anything between you men. I can't help you."

"Compulsory," answered Sinful, peering up into the soldier's face with a ghastly smile on his own. "Not at all. It's a labor of love and self-protection. It's painful to watch them scratch, and I'd hate to catch the itch. They call it prickly heat, but it's the itch—the dhobie's itch. They caught it loafing 'round Singapore. It's contagious, and they can't be discharged with a contagious disease. And as

they're too lazy to wash their clothes, I'm doing it for them."

"Guess you wouldn't be sorry to see 'em discharged?" laughed the soldier.

"Oh yes, I would. I love 'em, bad as they smell; but I hate to see them down with the itch."

He wrung out the last garment, dumped the bucket on deck; then he began filling a large tub with the rinsing-water, and the soldier went aft.

In the morning Mr. Becker, not caring to hoist over one of the ship's boats with a disaffected crew aboard, hailed the passing dingy of another ship and went ashore. He returned at noon with business in his face, and when he sang out "turn to" at one bell, as cleanly a crew as ever manned a rope answered the call, and, at his behest, began rigging cargo whips. Ballast was to be discharged, he informed the boatswains, and a cargo of sugar and hemp taken in for Shanghai. The captain, on his sick-bed, had arranged the charter, and, as it would take a month to load, he hoped to be well in time to sail.

Scant comfort for the homesick and well-doing men. Mr. Becker was not their ambassador; neither had he brought word from Mr. Seward. And to aid their troubles, something seemed to be the matter with them. Three came aft at nightfall and asked the steward for saleratus, as a remedy for prickly heat. The steward obliged them with a small package, but at breakfast-time next morning, when seven others came aft with the same request, he was compelled to refuse. He had none to spare, and suggested that they eat less, and drink less water in such a hot climate. The refusal was not of great moment, as the first three complained that it had

not relieved the itching and burning sensation which afflicted them from head to foot; but at noon, when the whole thirteen came aft and bared their chests to the mate, exposing an angry, red rash, and officially appealed to him for relief from the medicine-chest, the matter looked serious. They were in torment, they said, and a body of men in torment are a serious proposition on board ship. Mr. Becker disclaimed knowledge of medicine-chests, and sent for Sinful Peck. The little man, clean and sweet and smiling, followed aft and prescribed flower of sulphur, applied dry.

"For it's nothing but the itch," he said—"the dhobie's itch, which they must have contracted while sleeping in the dog-kennels at Singapore. Yes; I'll stake my professional reputation that it is the itch."

There being none to contradict a man with a professional reputation, the sulphur was taken forward and applied; and their heavy breathing and suppressed groans half an hour later as the irritant ate into their several skins brought encouraging words from Sinful and a fraternal pity to his face.

"It's only because it's taking hold, boys," he said to them. "It'll be all right by supper-time. You've been pretty severe on me, but, I tell you, I'm sorry for you."

"Sorry be damned, you little devil," said Seldom Helward. "I believe you've made it worse." But Sinful earnestly maintained the correctness of his diagnosis.

They turned to at one bell, and worked for an hour; then they mutinously quit their tasks, stripped and washed off the sulphur. A change of underwear followed, and for a while they felt better; but at supper-time the itching and burning had

returned. They were not polite in their remarks to Sinful, and that evening he had twenty-six socks and twenty-six pieces of underwear added to his wash-list. Smiling cheerfully in the darkness, he set to work.

In the morning the soldiers on guard would have reported the matter to the health doctor ashore, but, as the men were able to work and the disease showed no signs of spreading, Mr. Becker, with the assistance of Sinful, overruled them.

So while the miserable days of waiting for the captain's recovery and their prospective release wore along, they were kept at light tasks about the deck, the heavier cargo work being done by natives from ashore. Sinful advised the suffering men not to bathe so frequently, as water was bad for the itch or any cutaneous affection; but finding invariably a temporary relief after a bath and change of clothing, and ascribing his suggestion to an interested motive, they continued the practice, and kept him busy each night at the wash-tub.

But the nightly labor and loss of sleep may have told upon his self-control. He came aft one morning when the ship was nearly loaded, and showed his hands and wrists to the mate and the soldier on guard. He angrily demanded to be taken out of the forecastle; he had caught the contagion from fools who would not follow his advice. And he had not shipped to work on deck all day for the owners, and half the night as wash-woman for the crew.

He was too insolent, and Mr. Becker promptly knocked him down; but the next moment the mate felt the prick of the soldier's bayonet.

"Just what I've been waiting for, you inhuman brute," said the soldier. "Now, you'll go ashore

under arrest, and we'll have medical relief for these men."

The mate paled, but said nothing, and as the disfigured Sinful crept forward, the soldier roused his comrade, hailed a passing government steam-launch, and had Mr. Becker into it, bound shoreward, before the men forward knew what had happened.

But in the middle of the afternoon, Mr. Becker came back, in the same steam-launch that had originally brought the inspector of customs, and with him were this inspector, Mr. Brown, and a gaunt, hollow-eyed specter whom the crew with difficulty recognized as Captain Jackson, master of the ship, and another white-clad officer, with the insignia of a surgeon on his collar. They helped the captain up the gangway and seated him in a deck-chair; then Mr. Becker called Sinful Peck aft. Sinful came.

"I didn't know you were disrated, Peck," said the captain, weakly. "I had a relapse after I chartered the ship, and Lieutenant Seward, whom you depended upon to tell me, was sent inland. He has just returned. Mr. Becker is fined a good portion of his pay by the Provost Court, and I hope there will be no more trouble. Get your dunnage into the third mate's room, and send your thirteen friends aft to me."

"Thank you, sir," said Sinful, with his sweetest smile, and went forward. Then came the thirteen sufferers and stood before the captain.

"I am a very sick man," said he; "too sick to care for any more trouble with my crew for a while. I have cleared for Shanghai, and there is nothing to settle but your case. The mate informs me that you have behaved well, are anxious to be discharged,

and are willing to pay for it. I would not take your money, and as there are plenty of men ashore, will discharge you if the health officer will permit. But I hear you are down with some contagion."

They showed him their breasts and arms, and the surgeon drew near.

"Don't know what it is, capt'n," said Bigpig, "unless it's aggravated prickly heat. That isn't contagious."

"He swears it's the dhobie's itch," said the mate, pointing at Sinful, who had joined the group.

"It is not that," said the surgeon. "We are all too familiar with that ashore to fear it, or to bar it out as contagion. I don't know what it is. Such an aggravated rash, so similar on so many men, never came into my experience."

"But it is contagious, sir," said Sinful, dropping his dunnage to the deck and displaying his wrists. "They've made me wash their clothes for a month, and this morning I found this eruption."

"They cannot land, captain," said the surgeon. "The rules are very strict, with so many unacclimated soldiers on the island. You must take them to sea."

"Very well. You hear, men? You must make the best of it, and"—he sank back with a sigh—"so must I."

With desperation in their woe-begone faces, they slowly moved forward.

Next day, as the ship was passing Cavité on the way out to sea, Captain Jackson called his newly installed third mate up to him.

"Mr. Peck," he said, "you are a shrewd man and a physician. What is the matter with those men?"

Sinful looked gravely in his face.

"They'll murder me, captain, if they ever find out; but it's nothing that soap and water won't remedy. Let them wash their own clothes, and rinse them well. As long as they made me wash them I dosed the rinsing-water with croton oil."

XVIII

EVEN with a contented, respectful crew forward and friendly superiors aft, a third mate's berth is not a sinecure. He is at the beck and call of every sailor who wants more paint, more oil or tar—who wants his scraper sharpened, or is dissatisfied with his marline-spike. When the day's work at sea is done he must know that everything is stowed away in its proper place, and in sail trimming or shortening must be first to spring to a rope or into the rigging. In the night watches he is but an aid to the first mate, and derives his authority from him, possessing no influence over the men that he cannot base upon his popularity with them, and receiving no respect from them that he cannot enforce from his superior seamanship. Navigation—the science of the sextant, chart, and log-book—he is not supposed to know, and any display of such knowledge would be an affront to his superiors, one of whom, the second mate, is also immune from the requirement. With everything in his favor he is sure to be unhappy; and Sinful Peck, though as active, intelligent, and willing a worker as the ship contained, began the passage from Manila to Shanghai under as unfavorable conditions as ever confronted a third mate.

The twelve landsmen of the crew, dull, apathetic, limited men, disliked him with the jealous antipathy which ignorance feels for superiority but lately lifted above it. The thirteen others, his townsmen—his peers in brain, professional knowledge, and experience—nursed no such cheap emotion as this, but rather a sense of injury and defeat and desire for reprisal which, in the minds of such men, held more of menace towards Sinful than would be the hatred of a worldful of weaklings. The two boatswains, the carpenter, the steward, and the cook were quiet, peace-loving men, ready at all times to follow the line of least resistance; but the first and second mate joined the landsmen in their jealous disapproval of him, and supplemented this feeling with the sense of injury and defeat felt by Sinful's thirteen compatriots. His one friend in the ship was the captain who had promoted him, a man unable to stand erect, or to speak in a loud voice.

At the first Sinful was not, or perhaps did not care to be, diplomatic. He made no secret of his contempt for the two mates above him, repeating their orders when given him with a flippancy of tone that was more than exasperating, and delivering them to the men with a ring and a snap that spoke whole pæans of triumph. It brought results before sail was made. The irritable Seldom Helward, incensed at Sinful's unnecessary repetition of an order to "loose that fore-royal," sprang upon him, shook him vigorously, and hurled him twenty feet along the deck. The first and second mate, though looking directly at the fracas, turned their backs, pretending not to see; but Captain Jackson, reclining in his invalid's chair on top of the after-house, attached more importance to the episode. He sat erect, and

as the mutinous Seldom mounted the rail to obey Sinful's order, and Sinful picked himself up, smiling cheerfully, he called his three officers up to him. They came, Sinful still smiling, but limping painfully and rubbing his elbow.

"I have noticed, Mr. Becker," said the captain to the first mate, "and Mr. Brown"—he looked at the second—"an antagonism between you two and Mr. Peck. It must end at once. I have made him third mate, and he is one of yourselves, though, perhaps, from his small stature unable to hold his own in a personal encounter with any of the men. Did you see him assaulted just now?"

"I didn't see any assault, capt'n," answered Mr. Becker, somewhat sheepishly. The second mate also declared his blindness.

"I saw it, and I saw you both look elsewhere. Now, we are good for a month at sea with the worst crew that ever happened, and you begin the first day with your antipathies towards one another. I want you to shake hands, suppress your feelings, and remember that you are officers who may at any moment be called upon to put down mutiny. Is there any grievance—anything unexplained, which may be settled at once?"

"Nothin' but his blamed lip when he was 'fore the mast," growled Mr. Becker. "An' a first mate is usually consulted when a man's taken out o' the fo'castle, sir. I don't see no medals on him."

"I am the judge of his competency. He nursed you when crippled, took your place for a time, and did your work well. Mr. Brown, what have you against Mr. Peck?"

"Nothin' but what the mate says, sir—except

that he was mighty quick to shoot me outside o' Singapore."

"He shot you for maltreating him against my orders. He also nursed you. The action of those men at the time in promptly taking advantage of the situation and dictating terms to me ought to be a warning to you. They are the same men. Do you carry your pistols?"

They all affirmed that they did, Sinful adding that since he had shot Mr. Brown he had suffered remorse that would forever prevent him from again using a pistol unless his life were in danger.

"For it's an awful thing, captain," he said, earnestly, "to have the blood of a fellow-man on your hands."

"It depends a good deal on the fellow-man," said the captain, dryly. "But the feeling is creditable. You surely hold no grudge against Mr. Brown or Mr. Becker?"

"Not at all, captain. For both of them I entertain feelings of the highest respect. I regret the false position in which I have been placed, which has prevented them from understanding me, and I welcome this opportunity to make myself clear. I sincerely hope that we can finish the voyage in amity and good-fellowship."

Some of the words were lost on the first mate, towards whom Sinful turned as he finished the speech, but his earnest manner and extended hand were understandable, and with a slight softening of his rugged countenance he took Sinful's hand, stammering, "Hope we'll get on all right."

"And, Mr. Brown," continued Sinful, fully as earnestly, to the second mate, "I want you to forgive, if you will, my impulsive action in shooting you

a few months back. Let me assure you, sir, that the regret and remorse, and the fear that you would die, have been punishment to me far greater than the pain attending your wound."

Such polished diction was irresistible. The second mate's seamy face expanded to a smile, and he, too, took the extended hand.

"That's all right, Mr. Peck," he said. "You're forrard then, and now you're aft; so we've got to pull together."

"That is well," remarked the captain. "Now, call that man Helward down from aloft and put him in irons—and understand, no temporizing with this crew. If you weaken in the least they will take advantage. The law forbids you to resent insolence from a sailor by assault, but you may legally order him to any work as punishment, and if he refuses, you may order him in irons and shoot him if he resists. That is the law."

As they turned away, a long-drawn, throaty hail came from aloft: "Sheet home the fore-royal, sir," and the men forward, who, in the absence of supervision, had clustered in groups, watching the confab on the after-house, sprang to the royal gear and waited orders. But none came. The captain, sinking back in his chair from weakness, called to his departing officers: "Never mind the royal. Get him down and iron him."

"All right, sir," answered Mr. Becker, and then, funneling his hands, he sent a thundering roar at the man on the fore-royal yard. "Come down from aloft. D'ye hear, up there? Come down."

Seldom descended, and the first and second mate went forward to meet him, while Sinful entered the cabin and emerged with a pair of wrist-irons; but

he discreetly remained aft. As Seldom dropped from the rail to the deck, Mr. Becker shoved a pistol into his face, and Mr. Brown, holding another at arm's-length by his side, looked sternly and significantly into the serious faces of the other men, who were drawing near.

"Up with your hands—quick," tersely commanded the mate.

Seldom *was* quick. He knocked the pistol upward and it discharged its bullet over his head; then, with a furious imprecation he clinched the mate, and the two, locked tightly, wrestled and whirled about the deck, struggling for possession of the weapon. Some of the men secured belaying-pins, but Mr. Brown's leveled pistol and threatening language prevented them from joining the fray, which was over almost as soon as begun. The mate was seasoned and muscular, but not quite as much so as Seldom, who, at a favorable moment, brought both hands to bear upon the firearm and wrenched it away from the officer. Then, his ferocious face purple with rage and exertion, he struck him down with his first and sprang back, cocking the pistol.

XIX

"BLAST your soul!" he yelled. "What's this for? What—"

His back was towards Mr. Brown, who interrupted the speech by gripping his collar and pressing the cold muzzle of his revolver into the hair-roots at the back of his head. Now was the critical moment for those men, were they seriously engaged in mutiny, to have interfered. But they were not engaged in mutiny, and interference would surely result fatally for Seldom. They held back.

"Lower that gun," commanded the second mate, "or I'll blow your head off. Stoop down and lay it on the deck. Don't wriggle, blast you, or you'll die."

The cold muzzle was persuasive. Seldom wavered but a moment, his head slowly moving to the right and left, then, stooping, he deposited the pistol on the deck, and the furious Mr. Becker, now on his feet, seized it and covered the men.

"Don't ye make no breaks, damn ye," he spluttered in his rage. "Keep back. March him aft, Mr. Brown."

With the second mate's hand on his collar, and the pistol still at the back of his head, Seldom was marched aft to where Sinful waited at the mizzen hatch; and when the mate was satisfied that the men meant no present demonstration, he followed.

With as sad an expression as he could assume, Sinful snapped the manacles on the conquered Seldom's wrists.

"This is a most painful duty, Seldom, I assure you," he began; but he said no more. By a sudden backward movement of his head he barely avoided the impact of Seldom's two fists on his face, and stepped aside, out of range.

"Jackson," shouted the enraged man to the captain, who was leaning forward in his chair and looking down on them, "what am I ironed for? What righ have you to put me in irons?"

"For assault upon my third officer. I am within the law. Remember that. Make him fast in the lazarette, Mr. Becker."

"Within the law, are you?" yelled Seldom. "Then, by God, the law will be changed! I'm no slave. I'll make things hot for you when I get back, and don't you forget it."

"Take him below, and send the crew aft—all hands. And, steward," said the captain to this functionary, who just then appeared at his side with a shot-gun, "feed that man hard bread and water with the full allowance every fifth day."

While Seldom, profanely expressing his opinion of Captain Jackson, his officers, and the law of his country, was led up the poop-steps and aft to the lazarette, Mr. Brown summoned the crew. When they had mustered beneath the captain he addressed them.

"Men," he said, weakly, for the excitement was telling upon him, "you have seen one of your number ironed and put upon bread-and-water for insubordination and assault upon an officer. This will happen to each and all of you if you duplicate his offense, and you will serve a sentence in jail at Shanghai, as he will. On the other hand—and I speak particularly now to you thirteen men from

Cleveland—I am willing to pay you off at Shanghai, as I would have done at Manila had you not been suffering from an eruption of the skin which the health officer considered contagious—but only on condition that you give me no more trouble. I am a very sick man, and cannot stand it. I am extremely anxious to be rid of you, but would as soon put you in jail as discharge you. Take your choice."

"That's a fair proposition, captain," spoke up Bigpig Monahan, "and I can say for all of us that we have meant no trouble, in this very hope o' getting clear of the ship and back home. But Seldom's hot-tempered, and your third mate deviled him into the break he made. And as for that eruption of the skin, why, we've figured it out. There's a big empty bottle labeled croton oil in the forecastle, and it was full when Sinful brought it forrard to doctor his leg. He never used any on his leg. He put that stuff in the wash-tub when he washed our clothes, and it brought out the rash that fooled the doctor at Manila."

The captain was too feeble to smile, but the face of the second mate took on a quivering grin, and even the saturnine countenance of Mr. Becker looked cheerful for a moment. Sinful's was non-committal.

"You made him wash clothes for you until one or two in the morning, I hear," said the captain. "Can you blame him?"

"Not exactly, capt'n; it's tit for tat. He crimped us at New York, and ever since has played these tricks to compel us to finish the voyage with him. When we've had him forrard we've squared up—that's all. Now, capt'n, I want to ask, at the same

time that I promise for the rest that we'll act right and do our work until we get to Shanghai, that you'll let Seldom out. He's with us on this good conduct deal, and unless he's aggravated wouldn't harm a fly."

"No. He will remain in irons and go to jail until the ship is ready to leave Shanghai, when he will be brought aboard and put to work."

"Very well, capt'n"—and Bigpig's face straightened—"but you know why we submit to this. Three mates and yourself, armed night and day—"

"That will do," interrupted the captain.

The three mates had remained on the main-deck close to the poop-steps. At the promise of renewed friction contained in Bigpig's words, Mr. Becker and Mr. Brown stiffened up, ready for action; but Sinful spoke, for the first time.

"Captain," he said, looking upward, "this man's mention of arms brings the matter close to myself. I have spoken of my scruples against shooting a fellow-man, unless my life is threatened. I could not shoot a dog, even one of these dogs. My life is in no danger from them; they are too cowardly. Banded together they have overcome and misused me, but not a cur among them would dare face me alone. Now, with regard to my scruples against having blood upon my hands, and the chance that two or more of these brutes may seize me unawares some time and disarm me, it is best that I carry no pistol. In their hands it would be a menace to you and my superior officers. Mr. Becker, here is my gun." He handed a pistol to the wondering mate, and stepped towards the group of men. "You heard, did you not," he said to Bigpig, a giant who overtopped him by more than a foot, "what I said?

You are dogs and cowards. I am unarmed and do not fear to tell you. I rely solely upon your cowardice and my own sense of right. Not a man among you dare raise your hand against an unarmed officer, smaller than the smallest of you."

"Mr. Peck," called out the captain, warningly; but the mischief was done. It was a brave speech, even from a man confident of his backing, for the captain had depressed his shot-gun and the two mates had drawn their pistols. But it was too much for the even-tempered Bigpig, and for the first time he lost his self-control. With a contemptuous half-grin on his face he brought his open hand around at arm's-length and smote Sinful in the face, much as a big school-boy strikes a smaller. The little man seemed to curl up in the air, and before he reached the deck Tosser Galvin's big boot caught him and sped him towards the companion-door, into which he floundered. He stood up a moment later, wheezing with pain and rage—ready for more; but by this time Bigpig and Tosser were covered by two revolvers and a shot-gun, and the feeble voice of the captain had said: "Iron those two men."

"Oh, I suppose so," said Bigpig, wearily, with his hands uplifted. "But understand, capt'n, I didn't strike an officer. I struck a little wretch who forgot he was an officer. This won't bear—"

"Shut up!" ordered the first mate. "Mr. Peck, can you get the irons—two pair?"

Sinful could, though he limped on both legs now, and displayed a fair imitation of one-sided mumps. He disappeared in the cabin and returned with the manacles. Silently and smilingly he secured them on the wrists of the offenders, then turned to the mate with the remark: "I took the liberty to count

the supply, sir. There are ten pair more—just enough to go around."

"Understand this, too, captain," said Tosser, shaking his two fists upward. "Look out for yourself when we get back."

"Put them in the lazarette," said the captain. Then, while Bigpig and Tosser climbed the steps on the way to their prison, he addressed the others.

"The action of these men," he said, "does not affect my promise to discharge you if you make no further trouble. If you do, you are liable to be shot, or you will go in irons and to jail, and then finish the voyage with these three. Take your choice."

His last words were whispered. He sank back in a faint, and was attended by the steward, while the men, urged by the menacing pistols and threatening eyes of the mates, moved sullenly forward. At the mate's order, one went aloft to overhaul the gear, and the fore-royal was set. Then followed the rest of the canvas, the tug was dropped, and they worked through the day, moodily but quietly.

XX

IN spite of his severe punishment at the hands of Bigpig and Tosser, and the probability that it would be repeated by one or more of the sullen men whom he had stigmatized as curs and cowards, Sinful stoutly refused to carry arms, even against the urgent advice of his brother officers.

"For they will not dare kill me," he maintained, "nor—now that the three worst are out of the way—assault me singly; and I know that if I was armed when Monahan struck me I would have shot him dead. That is a result I do not wish for. No; all I need is to avoid them at night."

This he did, never leaving the protection of the mate's pistol in the night watches. Luckily, perhaps, the weather was easy and there was no need of his presence among them in shortening sail. But in the broad light of day he went fearlessly to and fro, directing them at routine work with sneer and insult and objurgation. Had Captain Jackson been wiser he might not have removed from them the restraining influence of Bigpig Monahan, their spokesman and leader, even in company with the pugnacity of Seldom and Tosser; for the master-mind now was Poopdeck Cahill, a man of dignity and refinement, the last of all to wish for trouble, but the more vulnerable on this account to the gibes of Sinful. Poopdeck kept them in order for a week, then laid aside the mantle of civilization and appeared a natural man, but a paleolithic man—an animal—a raging wild beast. Sinful was purple in the face when Mr. Brown arrived with an iron belaying-pin,

and assuredly would have died right there—on his back with Poopdeck kneeling on his chest—had not the belaying-pin crashed down and caused a diversion which relieved the stricture on his windpipe. A vigorous thumping between the shoulder-blades started his lungs at work, and he was soon able to snap the irons on the wrists of the unconscious Poopdeck and assist in dragging him to the lazarette. Here, backed by the presence of the first mate and his gun, he nursed back Poopdeck's senses, and, before following the mate up the hatch, gravely admonished the manacled four on the evil of their ways. When the mate had gone forward, however, he peered down and reviled them earnestly and bitterly, as cowards, poltroons, bullies, dogs, and dock-rats. They replied in kind, but, their hands being fettered, threw nothing at him.

Yet, when a man has gone down into the deep, dark valley and returned, he is apt to feel for some time a more or less earnest regard for the conditions which sent him there, and Sinful, though as intrepid a character as ever went to sea, could not but have been impressed by his late experience with the frenzied Poopdeck. Though still refusing to arm himself, he no longer boasted of his immunity from danger, and even voiced an opposite view of the case, declaring that he now feared to go among them, and urging upon his brother officers—over whom, from his superior education, tact, and conversational powers, he was acquiring a dominating influence—the necessity of strong, coercive measures in dealing with such murderous scoundrels. The brother officers responded—the murderous scoundrels were deprived of their afternoon watch below, and, though displaying unusual activity and

zeal in their work, were spoken to after the manner of convict camps and Mississippi steamboats.

Sinful himself spoke softly to them, either from his changed attitude or from the abiding effects of Poopdeck's clutch—an irritant sore throat which made loud language painful—until, the captain being recovered sufficiently to walk about the decks and assert a little of a captain's dignity, he roused himself to the duties of his position, and, his throat being better, out-officered the other two in abuse and vituperation. Also, did he make for himself—not to use upon them, as he explained to the cautious and law-abiding captain, but as a symbol of authority—an instrument of torture from three short lengths of tarred rope, which, when finished, was half knout and half cat-o'-nine-tails. This he carried continually, flourishing it menacingly as he approached the men; and when there was a sudden call to trim sail, and they rushed to the braces in squads of four or more, he would fall into their wake as though chasing them, swishing his whip over their heads and repeating sharply, again and again, the orders of the mate. They stood this for a day; then, when he had pursued Shiner O'Toole and General Lannigan to the forehatch, enjoining upon them the need of haste in procuring swabs and buckets from under the top-gallant forecastle, they turned suddenly, threw him upon the hatch, and—one at his head, the other at his heels—held him face downward while Moccassey Gill, a man of muscle and weight, ran down from the forecastle deck and picked up the whip. It was not premeditated—just a fortuitous concomitance of time, place, and men. It was early in the morning; the rest of the watch and the mate were aft, unable to see, and the

men who had captured the pestilent tormentor were the three of the crew least likely to think of consequences.

Sinful struggled vainly but silently, while Moccassey peered aft on one side of the forward house, then, crossing the deck, peered aft on the other. With glistening eyes and a lurid smile, he then returned to the hatch and said:

"Oh, but the good Lord is good to us. Hold him tight, boys."

"What you going to do?" snarled the captive.

"Whip you, my son—whip you till you've learned something." He felt of the three parts of tarred rope. "Such a nice whip as he has made; such a regular out-and-out dog-whip—for the dogs. He's put buck-shot in the ends. Hold him tight, the helyon—hold him tight."

Moccassey rolled up his sleeve, circled the whip over his head, and brought it down with a "swish" on the back of Sinful. The little man quivered convulsively, but gritted his teeth and emitted no sound. Again circled the whip, and again it swished down on the shrinking form on the hatch. Sinful closed his eyes, while his face grew red, the veins on his forehead bulged, and his lips parted in an angry grin. Shiner and General, seated on the hatch with elevated knees, held his wrists and ankles with viselike grips. As the whip rose again, one of the watch on deck came around the corner of the house carrying a bucket, and at a warning hiss from Moccassey stepped sideways, out of sight of those aft, and placed the bucket on the deck.

"That's right," he said, with an approving smile, "give it to the whelp."

"Where's Gunner Meagher, Turkey?" asked

Moccassey, fingering the whip. "This exhibition's free to all residents of Cleveland."

"Aft, swabbin' paint."

"He'll miss it. Call the rest."

Turkey Twain stepped into the starboard forecastle, and in a minute emerged with Ghost O'Brien, Jump Black, Sorry Welch, and Yampaw Gallegher, rubbing their eyes, but willing to lose sleep to enjoy the spectacle. They surrounded the group on the hatch, and Moccassey again whirled the whip aloft and brought it down. Still the suffering victim made no sound of complaint; nor did he until the tenth stroke, given with all the strength of a strong man warming up to his work, brought an involuntary, wheezing groan from him.

"Curse you!" he said, as he writhed and twisted, and, lifting his head, glared around at them. "Are you trying to kill me? Are you all here? Get them all."

"All but Gunner, my son. He's busy."

"Here's Gunner," whispered one of the men, and Gunner Meagher and his bucket appeared among them.

"For God's sake, boys!" he exclaimed—"what does this mean?"

"Tutelage and reprisal, Gunner," answered Moccassey. "Keep your mouth shut and look on."

"I will not. This is unchristian."

"Dry up, Gunner," said one, in a low, but menacing tone. "Go below and pray, if you like."

Again that terrible whip came down, and now Sinful responded with an ear-splitting shriek. It was somewhat disconcerting; the men separated and looked anxiously towards the corners of the house. Then around the port corner came something more

disconcerting—the first mate, with a belaying-pin in one hand and a leveled revolver in the other. Shiner and General released the captive and scrambled to their feet; but Sinful, with eyes half closed and mouth half open, remained where he was.

"Don't shoot, Mr. Becker!" shouted Gunner, while the rest scattered. "He isn't dead—merely in a faint. It's all over. Don't—"

XXI

BUT Mr. Becker did shoot, and Gunner suffered the usual punishment of peacemakers. The little finger of his raised hand received the bullet, and the first joint left it. He looked at it, shook the blood from it in a shower of drops, then, white with rage, sprang at the mate. Mr. Becker had paused to hurl the belaying-pin at Moccassey, and when Gunner's long right arm twined around his neck he had not recocked the revolver, and was now prevented by Gunner's obstructing left thumb, which, with the other fingers, gripped the weapon. Once more a furious struggle for the possession of a pistol waged on that forward deck, but this time promising different results. Gunner, though lithe and active, was no match for the heavier mate, and could only hamper him in the use of his pistol, while his strength lasted; but, on the other hand, those eight men were more than half committed to mutiny, and had little to lose by further action. They acted. Sorry Welch picked up the belaying-pin that had impacted on Moccassey's chest, and with a wild war-cry—inherited, no doubt, from his Celtic

ancestry—followed by "The jig's up, boys; let's take the ship again," joined the fray. Moccassey came on with the whip, the rest secured belaying-pins from the rail, and Mr. Becker became a storm-center.

The first blow on the mate's head loosened his clutch on the pistol, and Gunner secured it. Then, while the rain of blows continued, and the mate, weakly shielding his head and face with his arms, led them slowly along the deck as a hornet victim leads the swarm, Gunner ran aft with the pistol and met the newly wakened captain and second mate at the forward cabin-door. Each carried a bright revolver, but neither used it at present. Gunner, the transformed, had covered them with his own.

"Put them down on the deck, men of Belial," he yelled, while his white face worked convulsively, and the blood dripped from his pistol-hand. "Put them down, or you will enter the presence of your God. Steward, come out of that."

There was sudden death in Gunner's maniac face, and they promptly obeyed him, the frightened steward, who, after rousing them, had hovered behind in the passage, elevating both hands in token of amity as he hastened out on deck. Gunner backed around against the cabin, so that he could look forward. The storm of battle had reached the waist of the ship, and the mate was prone upon his face, the center of an angry group of kicking, striking men, over whose heads rose an occasional belaying-pin and the steady, regular whirl of Moccassey's whip. The mate's groans could not be heard for their cursings and the swishing sound of that terrible whip; but over the hubbub, high and

clear, rang Gunner's voice, "Come aft here and pick up these guns."

Moccassey Gill and a few others left the crowd and came on a run, but they did not pick up the guns. A pistol spoke from forward, and Gunner dropped the weapon in his hand and leaned heavily against the cabin, holding his dangling right arm with his left hand. Captain Jackson and Mr. Brown recovered their pistols and the one dropped by Gunner; but before there was time to bring them to bear upon the advancing men, another report came from forward, and Moccassey received a bullet. He fell to the deck; those with him halted, and those amidships ceased attentions to the mate and scattered to the right and left, seeking cover. At the corner of the forward house, leaning against a water-cask, was Sinful Peck, with a business look on his face, and two revolvers in his hands, both held at a level with his eyes.

"Surrender!" he shouted. "Surrender—give it up, or I'll drop you all, one by one."

"Up with your hands, you scoundrels," said the captain, advancing with his second mate. "Don't run—come aft here, every one of you. Muster at the mizzen hatch with your hands up."

They came—red in their faces and breathing deeply from their recent exertions, but meekly—with hands raised.

"The mate shot Gunner, capt'n," began one, in expostulation.

"And Mr. Peck shot him again. That is well. You are fools; you will spend your time at Shanghai in jail, and you will finish this voyage, instead of getting your discharge. Mr. Peck, get the irons."

Sinful was coming, and after him crept Mr.

Becker—a wreck of a man—who only reached the hatch, where he sat down.

Sinful entered the cabin and returned with the jangling manacles, which, as each man lowered his hands in turn, he snapped on their wrists. But his face was still sober and business-like, and his tongue quiet until, having ironed the seven standing men, he turned to the prostrate Moccassey, lying in his blood.

"Where are you hit?" he asked, in the tone of a physician.

"In the leg, damn you," groaned Moccassey.

"Serve you right for being a fool. Did you think you hurt me, with a quilted lining to my shirt?"

He ironed him, and then turned to Gunner, who had sunk to the deck.

"I'm sorry, Gunner," he said, gently, "for you were the one man to express sympathy for me. But I am an officer here, and you were a mutineer. Where is it—in the arm? We'll pull you through, old man. Just remember that you're a Christian, and I'm a sinner. Don't hold this against me, Gunner."

"Not as I hope to be forgiven myself," groaned the remorseful Gunner.

Sinful ironed him and stood up. Then the seven were led to the lazarette, and the two wounded men carried there, while the suffering first mate went to his room and his bed. The captain entered their offenses in the official log according to law, and Sinful, as an officer, signed his name, and on retailing the events of the morning to the captain, was highly complimented on his courage and marksmanship.

But the second mate was more curious, or, perhaps, had less on his mind than a captain whose crew is reduced to one-half at sea. He mildly joked Sinful on his unwillingness to shoot a fellow-man.

"Where did you get the pistols, all of a sudden?" he asked.

"Had them on me all the time," answered the little man, smiling sweetly. "Had them for just such an emergency."

"But why didn't you use 'em when they hammered you?"

"If I had, they would have stopped hammering."

"But why—"

"If they had stopped hammering me, they would not have gone in irons. They would have got their pay and left me at Shanghai. I would be lonesome without them on this long voyage. I am making this voyage for my health, you know, and I want my old-time friends around me. Yes, they are dogs and dock-rats, and all kinds of evil things, but I love 'em."

XXII

THE lazarette on board ship is the space within the poop or quarter deck, and is usually entered by a small hatch on the starboard side abaft the cabin trunk, which latter is built up from the main-deck and extends above it to give room for windows and companion-ways. The alleys at each side of the house, and the open part abaft containing the wheel and binnacle, are paralleled below, and the forward ends of the lazarette alleys, or "wings," can be entered by two ports under the poop-steps, closed and caulked at sea, and secured from within by ring-bolts and bars. In the median lines of the alleys arise in the after part, abreast of the wheel, the quarter bitts—strong posts for mooring the ship—which are also built up from the main-deck and extend above it. The lazarette is a handy place to stow coils of rope, spun-yarn and marline, bolts of canvas, bales of oakum, and similar stores in the mate's department. It is also a good place to stow unruly sailors, and in this regard has but one drawback—its contiguity to the cabin, through the thin walls of which may filter profanity and disrespectful opinions of the captain and officers. And when there are as many as thirteen unruly sailors confined in the lazarette—thirteen aggressive, reckless, self-respecting Americans reduced to the happiness of desperation, the noise they can make, the language they can use, and the songs they can sing at unseemly hours of night, give this drawback the importance of a positive menace to health. Captain Jackson had not slept for forty-eight hours fol-

lowing the incarceration of the mutineers, and his consequent irritability was not decreased by the cheerfulness of his third mate, who, sleeping in the port-forward corner of the cabin with the first mate, had, with selfish sagacity when given the work, stretched the heavy chain to which the prisoners were manacled along the starboard alley from the quarter bitt to the ring-bolt in the port. To this chain he had moored the unruly thirteen when conquered and docile; but now, rested and mutually encouraged, with the certainty of jail in Shanghai ahead of them, and nothing to be lost by further violence, they assumed an attitude which made their shifting over to the other side a task at which Captain Jackson hesitated. It had been found manifestly impracticable to confine by the hands so many men, who must eat and drink; so, excepting for one, leg-irons had been substituted for wrist-irons, and their arms were left free. These arms were powerful levers terminating in vises or hammers, according to their owners' intent.

Of the fourteen men from Cleveland who had sailed from New York in that ship's forecastle, Sinful Peck alone had escaped the physical upbuilding coming of fresh air, hard work, and simple fare. Stoop shoulders had straightened, knotty muscles had grown on frames long burdened with fat, obesity was gone from them, sunken eyes had filled out and brightened, many wrinkles had left their faces, and it even seemed that there were less gray hairs in their heads. In appearance they were twenty years younger, and in behavior thirty.

But, though Sinful Peck, round as a ball at the start, had lost flesh on the passage out, and become as slim and active as in youth, since his promotion

at Singapore he had shown surprising recuperative power, and the plentiful fare of the cabin table and the lesser demand for active movement had increased his girth to nearly the original dimension. There was not an ounce of fat on the bodies of the whole thirteen. Sinful seemed all fat; he waddled as he walked, and when standing leaned far back to bring his center of gravity over his feet. Captain Jackson, coming out from breakfast through the forward cabin door, looked with tired eyes at the rotund figure of his third mate as he rolled about among the men drying the deck amidships, and called to him.

"Mr. Peck," he said, with a little asperity, "you are getting too big. You eat too much and sleep too well. Better trade rooms with me; then I'll have some sleep and you'll reduce a little. What'll you do, with all that fat, when your thirteen friends catch you ashore?"

"They won't dare lay hands on me at home, sir," answered Sinful, soberly. "I stand too high in Cleveland, and can jail them all under the habitual-criminal law if they make a move—all but Seldom Helward. He has some money."

"The one you made your bet with? But, if they're such a tough lot at home, how was it that they came down to see you off—you, a lawyer and a physician—an educated man?"

"Oh," answered Sinful, airily, "I waived all that. We were sailors and shipmates in the old days, and it was a sort of reunion arranged by Seldom. He gathered up the riff-raff and paid their way to New York to have a laugh at me."

"And you arranged with the crimp to shanghai the lot," said the captain, with a smile. "Well, it's

rather funny, and you seem to have engineered me into it, too. I'm fairly committed to jail them and take them to sea again. I can't weaken and let 'em go now."

"Don't think of it, sir," answered Sinful, earnestly. "They're good sailor-men if properly kept down, and hard to replace."

"Did you search them well? Sure they have no files or implements to break loose with?"

"Sure, sir. There isn't a toothpick among them, and the irons are of hardened steel, too hard to file. I've tested that."

"How are the cripples getting on?"

"Fairly well, sir. Gunner Meagher and Moccassey Gill are the ones I shot, you know, and the bullets passed through. Poopdeck Cahill's broken head is mending, but he isn't quite sane yet. We have him fast by the wrists close to the quarter bitt, and the other two moored next to him on the chain, where I can 'tend them without getting in reach of the others."

"Look out for that. They could choke you to death. Have your gun handy when you go down, and sing out if they make any breaks."

"I'm not afraid of them, sir," said Sinful, smiling confidently; "and, capt'n," he added, "in regard to my overweight, why, if you object to it I can take it down. It's all a matter of fasting. I've fasted two weeks, many a time, and can do it again."

"No, no; not at all. I was only joking."

"Thank you, sir. Then I'll go to breakfast as usual. But I'll take a look at my patients first."

The two climbed the poop-steps and walked aft, the captain, his dignity forbidding any interest in the occupants of the lazarette, halting at the bin-

nacle, while Sinful passed on to the hatch and descended. Mr. Becker, the first mate, joined the captain a moment later, and volunteered some remarks on the state of the weather and the incompetency of the non-mutinous portion of the crew, which were not answered. The captain was listening to Sinful's cheery voice arising from below.

"Well, Gunner, old man," it said, "and how's the arm? Pretty sore yet? You'll be all right soon, but keep away from bullets and bad company. You've worn out the seat o' your pants—backsliding so much. And, Moccassey, you're all right. You're born to be hanged—couldn't kill you with an ax. Here, Poopdeck, that's a bad position to get into with congested brain—heels up in the air. Straighten out, man. Want more slack? Get your feet down and keep your head up. Here, take this oakum for a pil—"

The rest was a gasp followed by a shriek.

XXIII

CAPTAIN JACKSON and the mate sprang to the hatch and looked down. Sinful was not in sight, though choked expostulations in his voice could be heard faintly from the darkness forward in the alley. Almost directly beneath, flat on his back with his manacled wrists uplifted to the chain, and his knees drawn over his stomach, was the demented Poopdeck Cahill, his countenance twisting with the emotions of a disordered brain. Next to him, sprawled athwartships and fastened to the chain by the ankles, were the two wounded men; farther on was the indefinite figure of another; beyond this was darkness, and from far along in this darkness came the sound of Sinful's gasping voice.

"Mr. Peck," called the captain, lowering his head beneath the combing, "what's happened? Where are you?"

"He's here," answered a determined voice from the alley. "We've got him, and we've got his gun. I've got a bead on your head"—the captain quickly raised up. "That's right, stay up there," went on the voice. "We can talk just as well. D'ye want to make terms?"

"What terms?" asked the captain, after a moment's anxious thought. "Who is the man that's talking?"

"Me—Bigpig Monahan, damn you."

"And I'm talking, too," came another harsh voice, which the captain knew as Seldom Helward's. "We've got your pet, and we'll keep him till you

let us out o' this. Pass that spun-yarn this way, Moccassey."

Moccassey Gill wearily raised himself and pushed a coil of spun-yarn to the next man; it disappeared in the darkness.

"Make him fast, hand and foot, Bigpig," said Seldom. "And now, capt'n," he called, "here he stays till you unlock us—hold on, wait. Search him, Bigpig. Maybe he has the keys in his pocket. He locked us."

"Search all you like," came Sinful's angry voice. "They're in my room."

"Are you hurt, Mr. Peck?" called the captain. "How did this happen?"

"No, sir. Not hurt yet, and they don't dare hurt me. O-o-o-ow-ow."

"What are you doing to Mr. Peck down there?" asked the captain, sternly.

"Pinching him, capt'n," said Bigpig. "He's fat, and good to pinch. Go get the keys, and I won't pinch. If you want to know what happened, why, Poopdeck kicked him over three of us and the fourth got him. Isn't that so, Sinful, my son?"

Another howl from Sinful told of more pinching.

"No keys on him, Seldom," said Bigpig. "He's told the truth for once."

"Let up on this, curse you all," said Sinful. "What do you gain by torturing me? I haven't got the keys."

"Perhaps not, Sinful; but you're good to pinch. It's a real pleasure. Reach over here, Tosser, and take a bite. Shiner, can you get at his leg? Oh, he's so good!"

Captain Jackson could hear a scrambling and shuffling from the dark, and the chain visibly taut-

ened, indicating that more than those named were reaching for Sinful. His howls of agony soon attested their success. Men that pull ropes for a living may pinch hard.

Captain Jackson looked his first mate squarely in the eyes.

"What do you think of this, Mr. Becker?" he said.

"I think, sir," answered the mate, a vicious expression coming to his hairy face, "that there's but one thing to do. Get Mr. Brown, and the three of us jump down together with shot-guns."

"One of us would be shot surely. They have Mr. Peck's pistol. But that would not deter me if my ship were in danger—or his life. But they will do no more than misuse him. Can *you* shoot men in irons?"

"If need be. Why not, sir? You needn't take a hand. I'll do it."

"You will not," said the captain, angrily. "Go down and get the keys. I don't know what to do. I want to think. Get Mr. Brown up here."

The mate departed, returning a few minutes later with the news that the keys were not in sight, and followed by Mr. Brown, the second mate, whose working jaws indicated his interrupted breakfast. He was told the situation, but, like the captain, did not approve of Mr. Becker's suggestion.

"Mr. Peck," called the captain down the hatch, "where did you leave the keys?"

"On the nail over my desk, sir," answered Sinful. "But keep 'em there, capt'n. Keep these brutes locked up. They can't kill me—they don't dare—"

"Change your tune, my son," came Bigpig's voice, and Sinful's rose in a scream of pain.

"Now, little man, just ask your dear friend, the capt'n, to get the keys and let us out. Ask him nice—say please. Say, please, capt'n, go get the keys."

"I'll see you in hell first," stuttered Sinful. Then he broke forth into incoherent profanity, punctuated by yells; this subsided into a quavering moan at last, and finally, in response to Bigpig's repeated injunction to "say please," he called out, brokenly: "Oh, my God! capt'n, I can't bear it."

"Say please, my son," said the pitiless Bigpig.

"Please, capt'n," groaned the conquered Sinful. "Please get the keys."

Captain Jackson straightened up, with kindling eyes, and said to his first and second mates: "Go, both of you, and find those keys. Ask the steward." Then, down the hatch, "Men, I have sent for the keys."

"That's right, capt'n. You'll unlock us all, and promise to give us our discharge at Shanghai, so we can get home to business. Now, while you're waiting, and before you unlock us, just listen. Your pet is in a truthful mood to-day, and he wants to tell you something. Sinful, my son, you've admitted doping us all at a wine supper in New York, and shipping us aboard with you, but you've neglected to warn Captain Jackson of what may happen to him at home. What's my business in Cleveland?"

"You're a dock-rat— O-o-o God! O-o-o my God! my God!"

"What's my business in Cleveland?"

"Don't, in the name of Heaven! Stop—yes—a steamer capt'n."

"Correct, Sinful. What else?"

"Managing owner."

"What's my rating at Dun's?"

"I don't know."

"You knew when you sued me for fifty thousand five years ago. What was it then?"

"Half a million."

"What's Seldom's occupation at home?"

"I'm not his biographer."

"Yes, you are, and a maker of history. What's Seldom at home?"

"The same scoundrel he is here. Oh, don't, do-o-on't—yes, he's a skipper, too."

"Got as much money as I have, or more?"

"More."

"What's Gunner Meagher, the man you shot down?"

"A minister of the Gospel."

"More shame to you. What's Poopdeck Cahill?"

"An author."

"Shiner O'Toole, Ghost O'Brien, and Sorry Welch. What are they?"

"Liars and thieves."

"You mean business men, don't you, Sinful?"

"Yes, business men."

"Got money, haven't they?"

"Yes, other people's money. Take your hands off me and I'll give you all away."

"Listening up there, capt'n?" called Bigpig. "Taking this in?"

"I'm listening," answered the captain. "But what's this to me?"

"A little, if you're wise. Sinful, my son, tell the skipper what the firm of Welch, O'Toole & O'Brien can do in the way of raising ready money. How big a check could they sign on a pinch?"

"Oh, a million, I suppose."

"Two millions, maybe. Who is Yampaw Gallegher when he's dressed up?"

"Colonel in the army."

"Influential at Washington?"

"I suppose so."

"Turkey Twain. What's Turkey at his best?"

"A discredited politician."

"Wrong, Sinful. He was our mayor for two terms, and we'll send him to Congress yet. What are General Lannigan and Moccassey Gill on the Lakes?"

"Vessel brokers and owners."

"Own a big fleet?"

"Yes, big. The Irish get on well in this country."

"Jump Black. What's Jump, besides an able seaman?"

"Newspaper man."

"You mean managing editor, don't you?"

"I suppose so."

"Don't suppose. Give facts. Managing editor of what?"

"The *Cleveland* ——"

"Big, powerful daily paper, eh? What else is Moccassey Gill?"

"An all-'round sharper."

"You mean a syndicate promoter, don't you?"

"Yes."

"Tosser Galvin. Who's he?"

"Another sharper."

"You are becoming too flippant in your answers, Sinful." The howl of agony again began, rose to a scream, and sank to a moan. "Who did you say Tosser was at home?"

"Oh, Lord God! Monahan, don't kill me by inches. Let go."

"Who's Tosser, and what?"

"A banker, and a broker, and a promoter, too. Yes, and a vessel owner—and a tug owner—"

"That's enough. Who's his best friend in Cleveland? Needn't name him—the skipper wouldn't know him. What's his political position?"

"Chairman of the National Republican Committee."

"Strong man at Washington, eh, Sinful? Now, Capt'n Jackson," called Bigpig, "if you still think there are any thugs and dock-rats in this crowd, you are welcome to your opinion; but it'll cost you something."

"I have no opinion," answered the captain. "I only know that at Singapore you signed articles as sailors, that I have punished you for insubordination, and that, in holding Mr. Peck under restraint, you are still insubordinate, and amenable to further punishment."

"What more can you do?" came Seldom's rasping voice. "You've reached the limit, and the next thing must be to kill us. The first man o' you to come down that hatch on that errand 'll be shot 'fore he can move. We've got six bullets here."

"That's right," yelled others. "We'll hang for old sheep. You've played your last card, skipper. No more thunder left."

"As I told you," said the captain, "I have sent for the keys; but you are not yet released. Be careful how you threaten."

"Oh, go to the devil," said Bigpig. "We'd as soon stay here; but we'll keep this little, fat shyster with us for amusement."

"That is, you'll torture him."

"We'll amuse ourselves."

Another protesting cry in Sinful's voice came up the hatch.

"Mr. Peck," called the captain, "how are you situated? Can you stand it where you are?"

"They've tied me hand and foot, capt'n," wailed Sinful, "and made me fast to the ring-bolt in the port. Four o' them have their hooks into me now. I could stand it if they will let me alone, sir."

XXIV

CAPTAIN JACKSON'S face was troubled as he straightened erect. And the news brought by the two mates and the steward, who now appeared before him, did nothing to clear away the trouble. The keys could not be found. Another call to Sinful brought no light on their whereabouts. He had been careful to hang the keys in a safe place, he said, in view of this very exigency.

The captain headed another search, of the whole forward part of the cabin, of the booby-hatch, boatswain's-locker, and the deck itself. The men forward were questioned, but none had seen the keys, and, summoning the carpenter, with files and steel saws, they marched aft to the poop.

"As a matter of fact," explained the captain to Mr. Becker on the way, "I would welcome any reasonable excuse to release those men and get them to work. There's weather coming, as you can see—perhaps a typhoon. And what can we do with half the crew in irons and the other half incompetent?

And then, too, Mr. Peck once saved my life, and I can't condemn him to such punishment."

Which may, or may not, have been the real reason of Captain Jackson's complaisance. But the pedigree of his prisoners given by Sinful was extremely improbable, to say the least.

Chips tried a few strokes of file and saw on the leg-irons of Moccassey Gill, and gave up the task.

"No use, sir. They're hardened jus' so they can't be filed. Wrist-irons are softer. Will I file off them, sir?" he asked, pointing at Poopdeck's manacles.

But Poopdeck's distorted face and incoherent language made this inadvisable at present. It would not avail. Neither would it avail to release both ends of the chain—even though the forward end had not been secured to the ring-bolt by a hardened steel ankle-iron—and bring them on deck in a string. They would still be prisoners. Yet the captain offered them this. The soft iron chain could be cut. They received the proposition with yells of derision.

"But the keys are lost, men," said the captain. "I am willing to release you on your promise of good behavior, and discharge you at Shanghai; for there is a storm coming up, and I'll need you. Mr. Peck may be able to find the keys. Let him out, and my promise is good."

They were utterly unreasonable. They gave him the lie; he was up to some trick; he had broken his promise before; he had winked at Sinful's ill-treatment of them, which had resulted in their mutiny and incarceration; he was neither man nor gentleman; on the contrary, he was several other evil things that cannot be named here.

And over the hubbub Sinful's shrieks of pain arose high and shrill. They were amusing themselves.

Neither Mr. Becker nor Mr. Brown had heard Sinful's enforced description of his fellow-voyagers, and the little man had not saved their lives, or in any other way put them under obligations; so they naturally could not approve of the captain's hesitation and leniency. Mr. Becker again suggested the shotgun policy, and Mr. Brown advised smoking them into subjection. Both propositions were impatiently overruled. It was the listening steward who solved the problem. When the captain had despairingly turned away from them, he asked, gently:

"Shall I feed 'em the same grub, sir?"

Captain Jackson sprang to the hatch, a new light in his eyes.

"Mr. Peck!" he called. "How long did you say you could go without eating, to reduce flesh?"

"Two weeks, sir, and longer if necessary."

"Very well. Men, you will get neither food nor drink until you release the third mate, and I retract my promise to release you when the keys are found, and to discharge you at Shanghai."

There was silence for a moment, then a volley of invective belched up the hatch, of such voltage that they involuntarily shrank back a step or two. Then it calmed, and they heard Bigpig's deep voice grumbling out of the darkness: "All right; but you'll hear your baby's bugle every hour you starve us, and if it comes to it, we'll eat *him*."

"He must stand it," said the captain, determinedly to the others. "We'll make the Yangtse-Kiang in less than two weeks, and a man-of-war can settle this matter. It's better than shooting men in irons. Now, Mr. Becker," he added, with a look at a cloud-

bank gathering in the west, "begin with the kites and don't stop until you have the ship under storm canvas. I shall turn in. Call me when it blows hard."

With but twelve half-trained men the shortening down of this two-thousand-ton ship was begun none too soon. It took the whole day, and through it all the captain slept—soundly because of his utter exhaustion, and in Sinful's bunk, to escape the pandemonium in the starboard alley.

But it was his last sleep in bed until, nearly three weeks later, a Yangtse-Kiang pilot boarded the ship off the Saddle Islands, and took charge. By good seamanship and forethought, even with his reduced crew, he had weathered the gale—which, before it ended, blew his ship nearly to the coast of Japan—but early in the first night he lost his first and second mates. There had been urgent need of a reef-earing to smother and lash down a portion of the maintopmast staysail that was blowing out of the netting, and the unthinking second mate had sprung down into the lazarette, where they were kept. He did not come up, and Mr. Becker, who had seen him descend, and who lacked nothing of physical courage, sang out to the captain his suspicions, and followed Mr. Brown with drawn revolver. Neither did he come up. The captain, who had not understood his words over the noise of the gale, but who heard a pistol-shot as he hastened aft, listened at the break of the hatch to the explanations roared at him by Tosser Galvin, next man on the chain to the wounded Gunner and Moccassey. They had caught the second mate and disarmed him. They were then prepared for further action, and on the appearance of the first mate with

his gun had shot him in the leg, secured him and his pistol as he fell, and lashed him, with Mr. Brown, to the chain forward next to Sinful. They would all starve together until Captain Jackson chose to release them. And he was cordially invited to come down the hatch and join them.

Nothing could be done but to send down bandages for Mr. Becker's wound, which they humanely passed along.

Every fifth day, however, Captain Jackson yielded to the extent of lowering to them a bucket of water and a biscuit for each man, hoping that his officers would get their share, and that the taste of food in the mouths of the others would induce them to liberate their captives. Neither result was attained. They ate the food, drank the water, cursed him furiously, and demanded the keys, strangely enough denying the truth of the assertion that the keys were lost, and believing that of Sinful that he had left them in his room. It was only when an armed boat's crew from an American cruiser at Shanghai had sprung into the lazarette that their judgment was shaken. There was no further excuse for resistance, and they quietly relinquished their three weapons to the jackies, and permitted them to cut the bonds of the captives. Mr. Becker and Mr. Brown were lifted up the hatch—living skeletons, subjects for hospital treatment. Sinful followed, and, though slow in his movements, with less need of assistance. His fat was gone, his eyes were bright and full, his skin, where not disfigured by a black or blue spot, or hidden by the dirt of the deck, was pink, smooth, and healthy. It was easily inspected, for most of his clothing was torn from him. He sat upon the deck, smiling be-

nignly, and tossed a bunch of keys down to the ensign in charge of the boat's crew.

"They'll unlock the rest, sir," he explained.

Captain Jackson studied him in speechless wonder as the human wrecks were assisted up the hatch and laid out—harmless now—on the deck.

Fasting had been good for Sinful, for the two wounded men, and for the crazed Poopdeck, in reducing surplus fat on the first, and aiding the recovery of the others; but it had nearly been fatal to Mr. Becker, Mr. Brown, and the rest, who, with no reserve store to draw upon, were barely alive.

"Peck," said the captain, "in the name of God, what manner of man are you, anyway?"

"Why, I fed on my fat, capt'n," he answered, with an innocent look upward.

"But the keys, man. Where did you find them?"

"Capt'n, if I had told you where the keys were, you'd have let these plug-uglies out; wouldn't you, sir?"

"Plug-uglies? Then—are they not—"

"Rich men? Business men? Able to make trouble? No, sir. They're just what I always told you—rowdies and toughs. Every reply in my catechism was whispered into my ear while they had their fingers and thumbs buried in my flesh. It was like so many dogs, biting hard. I couldn't stand it. But—you'd have let 'em out if you had the keys, wouldn't you, capt'n?"

"Y-y-yes—think I would."

"I knew you would—and have kept your promise and discharged 'em here, and they would have had the laugh on you. Now, you can jail the scoundrels."

"And that's just what I'll do," answered the captain, bitterly, as he looked at his two officers

tearing at some bread which the steward had brought. "But the keys? Where were they?"

"In my pocket when I went down, sir. I was at fault; so, before they tied me, and at their first mention of making terms, I took 'em quietly out and laid them on the deck, close to the cabin trunk. They've been there since, and I picked 'em up on the way out."

XXV

IT may be predicated of a man foolish enough to make a fool bet, hardy enough to pay it, skillful enough to make his opponent and twelve interested friends pay it with him, and wicked enough to engineer the whole party into mutinous conduct and consequent incarceration in a Chinese jail, that he could be heartless enough to gloat over their suffering. And Sinful Peck justified such predication. When Captain Jackson returned from the trial and informed the small third mate that the consulate jail was a much more roomy and comfortable place than the forecastle, Sinful lightly replied that it was not in accordance with the eternal fitness of things for such scoundrels to be comfortable, and formally applied for the address of the best American tailor in Shanghai, money with which to pay for clothing, and shore-leave on which to wear the clothing whenever the ship could dispense with his service for a whole day. Captain Jackson obliged him with all three; Sinful was measured on board; the tailor took ashore with him instructions for the procuring of all articles of apparel outside his own line that a well-dressed American citizen

might need; and when the invalided first and second mates were able to resume work the goods had been delivered. He dressed himself after breakfast of the following day and stepped out on deck. They hardly recognized him.

His small figure—trim and symmetrical after his fast—was clad in immaculate creased trousers, colored waistcoat, and frock-coat of the finest material and latest cut and fit. He wore a standing collar and puff tie, with a tasteful pearl pin. Small gold links peeped out from under his coat-sleeves; suede gloves matching his tie covered his hands, patent leathers his feet, a shiny silk hat his head; and over all he wore the raglan-cut overcoat which, on far-away Fifth Avenue, was that winter adorning fashionable clubdom, while, to complete the transformation, he balanced in one hand a horn-headed cane, and gripped between his teeth a fat perfecto, which he puffed gently, as became a gentleman. Captain Jackson was so impressed that he personally escorted him to the gangway, and enjoined upon Ningpo Sam, the boatman he had engaged for his own transportation back and forth, to take him ashore, and to "stand by" to take him aboard in the evening. Sinful graciously thanked his superior, stepped down to the sampan, and Ningpo—a giant, for a Chinaman—sculled him to the nearest landing. Perhaps in all Ningpo's experience he had not seen so gorgeously arrayed a Yankee mate; for he had looked down on him with keen interest while working his crooked oar on its spike head, and, on receiving a generous tip at the wharf steps, asked, with Chinese mildness, "What manner fashion this? No cappen, no mate, no sailol man. Own ship? Big Melican ship all you?"

"All mine," responded Sinful. "You are right, my long-tailed friend. I own the ship and every man aboard. I am come ashore to look after some of my property landed last week. Be here ready for me at eleven o'clock to-night. Understand?"

Ningpo did, and the property owner engaged a rickshaw—a light but strong two-wheeled vehicle with a Chinaman for a horse—seated in which, and smoking cigar after cigar, he put in most of the day at the arduous task of sight-seeing. But, though his proud and confident horse crowded all other rickshaws from his path, and was allowed the right of way by a great many larger, more pretentious vehicles, Sinful displayed no interest in the stir he was creating; his heart was elsewhere, and after perfunctorily viewing the sights of the American, English, and French quarters, and seeing and smelling the abominations of Chinatown—Shanghai proper—he drove back to the American consulate and asked leave to visit the prisoners. So suave, polished, and prosperous-appearing a gentleman could be refused nothing; an obliging official furnished him a permit, and the information that, as the consulate jail was being repaired, the prisoners were now confined in a compound near the outskirts of the American Concession. As he was tired of riding, Sinful dismissed his horse, and, procuring a bunch of flowers for his button-hole from a nearby hothouse, walked to the compound, arriving about half-past four, when the afternoon was beginning to darken.

The compound was a square, gateless inclosure, with walls about twelve feet high and fifty from corner to corner, and surrounding on its far side a small stone house, whose door was the only en-

trance to the interior. Before this door a soldier in the uniform of the American legation guard paced up and down with shouldered rifle, which he grounded as Sinful approached and presented his pass.

"Certainly, sir," said the soldier, when he had examined it. "Come right in and go through. They're all in the compound."

"Are they ironed, manacled, lashed down, or otherwise restricted in their movements?" asked Sinful.

"Why, no!" answered the soldier, in surprise. "They can't climb the wall, and the inner door is locked. So they're loose—with the dogs."

"Dogs?" queried Sinful.

"This is the dog-pound, the only place to put them while the jail is being fixed. Come in."

"Not at all. I have no desire to play Daniel in the lions' den, and I always had a wholesome fear of dogs—two legged, or four. Can you get me a ladder? I only wish to speak with them, and the top of the wall is a good safe place. You see, I am third mate of their ship."

"Oh, yes—I guess. Well, there's no danger of your giving them guns, or tools, I suppose."

"Not as I value my life. I want the top of the wall for the same reason; but I might want to toss them a cigar or two. Have one yourself."

The soldier took the proffered perfecto, called within, and, when a Chinaman appeared, said to him: "Cook, get the step-ladder and put it up outside. Savvy? Outside for the gentleman to climb up. Savvy?"

"By the way," said Sinful, when the cook had brought out the steps, "as what I wish to say is

something of a private, personal nature, you will not object, I hope, to his placing the ladder down the wall a short distance, out of ear-shot?"

"Well—no," answered the man, a little doubtfully, however. "Your pass permits you to go among them. Talk to them anywhere you like. I can't leave the door, and the cook's busy."

So the ladder was placed on the street side of the compound, and as the next house stood in the middle of a large, hedge-bordered lawn, while on the other side was an extensive paddy field, Sinful was fairly secure against embarrassing listeners. He climbed the ladder, stood up on the top of the wall, and looked down.

There were the thirteen men he had shanghaied, some hatless, some coatless, all emaciated, gloomy, and desperate of face, and all pacing up and down to keep warm. Scattered around the inclosure were over two dozen dogs of all breeds and sizes, and, at sight of Sinful, these immediately set up a furious chorus of barking, over which no man's voice could be heard, until it was subdued to an occasional yap, by the boots of the biggest men. Sinful smiled down sweetly.

"Quite an assembly," he drawled; "a family gathering—a reunion, I should suppose. But who are the guests and who are the hosts?"

"Oh, you've called us dogs often enough, Sinful," answered the mild-spoken Gunner, "and perhaps we are, from your present standpoint; but is that a reason why you should torment us with the sight of tobacco smoke? Do you realize that we have been deprived of tobacco for nearly a month?"

No one but a sailor can appreciate the pathos in Gunner's plaint; but Sinful Peck was immune.

Still smiling, he took from an inner pocket a bunch of cigars and counted them. There were eight. He put them back, and from another pocket drew forth six more; and as he counted these they fidgeted visibly and looked up hungrily.

"Just enough to go around," he said, "and one for myself." Then, as their faces brightened, he pocketed the second bunch, and added: "But it would not be advisable, I think, to waste good cigars upon men accustomed to snipes."

Unable to conceal their chagrin and humiliation, they turned away, and a few dogs received hard kicks. But Sinful called to them, and they looked back.

"You fellows seem to think," he said, sharply, "that you're badly treated. Do you know what the law says about your case? Step here and listen, you evil-minded lobsters." They stepped closer, scowling viciously. Sinful drew a pamphlet from his pocket.

"Article five," he said, "of the amendments to section forty-five hundred and ninety-six of the Revised Statutes, has this to say." Then he read: "'For continued willful disobedience to lawful command or continued willful neglect of duty at sea, by being, at the option of the master, placed in irons, on bread and water, with full rations every fifth day, until such disobedience shall cease, and upon arrival in port, if of the United States, by forfeiture for every twenty-four hours' continuance of such disobedience or neglect, of either a sum of not more than twelve days' pay or sufficient to defray any expenses which have been properly incurred in hiring a substitute, or upon arrival in a foreign port, in addition to the above penalty'—listen, now, you

ingrates—' by imprisonment for not more than three months, at the discretion of the court.' "

"What's that got to do with us?" growled Bigpig Monahan. "We'll change all that when we get back."

"But as you haven't changed the law up to date you are amenable to it, and ought to be thankful that you haven't received the full penalty. Listen to this: 'For assaulting any master or mate, in whatever trade engaged, by imprisonment for not more than two years.' "

"Oh, get to hell out o' this, you and your law. What'd you come around here for, anyhow—rigged out in your glad rags? Think we want to see you?"

"Only to inform you that Captain Jackson, from the goodness of his heart, has not insisted upon the full penalty of the law, but is willing to take you home with him when the ship is ready for sea."

"Another passage in that hell-ship!" snarled Seldom Helward, picking up a beef-bone. "Tell him we prefer jail—and get down off that wall or I'll knock you off." He drew back his arm to throw, and the dogs, at the sound of these harsh tones from their fellow-prisoners, resumed their noisy protest at his presence, and the other men joined in with more or less articulate profanity. Over the hubbub Sinful smiled serenely, and placed the pamphlet back in his inner pocket. In doing so a cigar was displaced, which, in falling, went inside the wall.

There was a rush of men and dogs, and a dog got the treasure; but he immediately spat it out, shook his head and rubbed his mouth with his paws, then, on receiving a violent kick, retired howling, while two men broke the cigar in halves in the endeavor to secure it. Sinful uttered a joyous whoop,

and pulled out another; then, whistling—as men whistle to call dogs—he tossed the fragments of this down to them and drew forth more.

It was a painful spectacle; but sailors deprived of tobacco have lost half their manhood, and will submit to extremes to secure it. Only three—Bigpig, Poopdeck, and Seldom—held aloof from that mad scramble of men and dogs, and when the latter, with hatred and disgust in his face, let fly the beef-bone—which missed—the first two objurgated the scramblers.

"Shame upon you, boys!" called Poopdeck, his fine features ablaze with scorn. "Have you no self-respect left? Are you willing to be baited like wild beasts in a cage, while that little devil laughs at you?"

"Knock him off the wall," shouted Bigpig, picking up another bone and hurling it upward. The eager men wavered, looked sheepishly at the master spirits, then up at the little man, now dancing hilariously along the wall, whistling to them, calling out canine names, and tossing down fragments of cigars. And when he finally tossed them the stump from his mouth, the sight brought them to their senses, and there was fully as eager a scramble for beef-bones, of which the compound was full.

But it is notorious that a sailor cannot throw a stone straight. Not a missile in that upward shower hit the happy little man, and even his cane, which had slipped from his hand and took its place in the bombardment, flew wide of its mark. They raked and scraped, seeking bones in all the corners, and cleaned up the yard, but Sinful remained intact and jubilant. Then Seldom Helward pounced upon the last bone left, the property of a vicious

bull-terrier, who, through the whole disturbance, had been growling over it close to the wall. The dog resented the spoliation, snarled savagely, and nipped Seldom in the hand; whereupon the furious man, first hurling the bone, grabbed the brute by the hind legs, and, swinging him around, let him go.

Now, though a sailor may not throw a stone accurately, he can throw a heaving-line with fairly good aim; he, if a strong man, can stretch out sixteen fathoms of wet ratline stuff and send the end over the shoulders of a man ready to catch it; and the reason is that he uses a round-arm throw instead of the overhead motion of ball-players. That misguided terrier was about the weight of a wet coil of heaving-line, and he went straight to the target. He struck Sinful in the legs, almost upsetting him, and, gripping the immaculate trousers with his teeth, held on, growling angrily and endeavoring to better his grip.

"Hit him with dogs," yelled Bigpig; and he captured a cur and sent him flying. "Knock him off the wall with dogs. They'll 'tend to him outside."

Immediately there was another scramble, and dog after dog was run down, captured, and hurled at the tormentor on the wall. He was not laughing now, nor was he whistling, nor was he very happy; he was vainly pounding the bull-dog with his fists and trying to loosen his hold, and when another brute struck him in the chest, knocking him to his knees, he remained in that position, while the second dog—a huge, yellow mongrel of unkind disposition—secured a foot-hold, and yapped and snapped at his arms. To escape this assault he arose to his feet and kicked, and at this instant a third yelping cur hit him, and with but one foot on the wall, he went

over easily, floundered in a heap on the ground with the bull-dog still fast to him, and the third dog close by with as large a sense of injury as that possessed by the other two; then, as he arose unhurt to his feet, the yellow dog danced down the ladder, and the battle was resumed, to the accompaniment of jubilant shouts from within.

Many dogs had missed in their upward flight, and such of these as were not yowling in pain were eager for retaliation. Sinful became the center of a snarling, barking circle of brutes, braver because of their numbers, and eager for his destruction, who gradually forced him along the wall—towards the town. The cloth soon parted in the bull-dog's mouth, and, temporarily free of this encumbrance, he kicked and cursed, making his way slowly along the wall, and looking anxiously in the gathering darkness for a stick or stone. But in the muddy, alluvial soil of Shanghai there are few of such conveniences, and he could only fight with his thin-soled patent leathers. Once he was down, rolling in the mud with the pack surging above him; but, though bitten in a dozen spots now, he found strength to shake them off and regain his feet. He threw off his cumbersome overcoat and fought on—the better for its loss. A few of the dogs tore it to shreds and then resumed attentions to him. They soon had reduced his Albert frock to the same condition; his hat was gone, his face, hands, and linen covered with mud and blood. Slowly, with waning strength but undiminished pluck, he fought them down to the hedge fronting the lawn of the next estate—a low hedge from which the lawn rose in a succession of terraces to the house. And now, from the veranda of this house, came a deep-toned, roaring bark, and looking, Sinful beheld

a monster black brute, larger than the largest of great danes, bounding down the lawn.

"My God, I'm done for now!" he groaned, and fought on, hopelessly. But as the roaring, growling animal cleared the hedge at a bound, and braced around for a charge, an inspiration came to him.

"Sic 'em, old boy—sic 'em, Tiger!" he shouted, pointing at his enemies. "Go for 'em, good old boy. Go for 'em."

There is no knowing what was in the mind of that big dog—whether, accustomed to do as he was bid, and understanding English in his Chinese environment, he merely obeyed orders; or whether, like many large dogs, he sympathized with the under dog, and acted on his sympathy. Certain it is that he struck that snarling herd like a whirlwind. He killed the bull-dog with one mighty bite of his powerful jaws, flung another twenty feet, and, as he made for a third, the whole pack took to flight. Back they went in a storm of mud, yelping in fear, pursued by the big black hero—who brought down three while Sinful could see them—and scattered for safety in the paddy field beyond the jail.

"Much obliged, old man," called Sinful, bowing low, with a ghastly smile. "Much obliged to you, but I won't wait here. I'm in a hurry. Good-bye. Ever so much obliged."

Then he walked on, engaged the first rickshaw he met, and was taken to the wharf, where Ningpo Sam had great difficulty in recognizing him. Only a repetition of the morning's tip satisfied him that the bedraggled wreck before him was the wealthy owner of the ship that he had sculled ashore early in the day.

"Yes, Ningpo," said Sinful, wearily, as he seated

himself in the sampan. "It's me—only me; and I found my property in very good condition—so very good that I hardly think it will need more of my attention while here. Scull me quietly up to the port mizzen chains, and say nothing about my appearance to the captain, and I'll give you a dollar every Sunday morning. Is that a bargain?"

It was. Ningpo was faithful, and Sinful, having reached his room unobserved, concealed his mishap. By the time the ship was ready for sea, his bites were healed and he was nearly as fat as ever.

XXVI

THE same detail from the American war-ship that had escorted the mutineers to jail brought them aboard when the ship was ready for sea, and with them came an official from the consulate—a deputy, a brisk, middle-aged gentleman in a warm overcoat—Shanghai is cold in winter—who immediately entered the cabin with Captain Jackson, while the ensign in charge of the detail, after lining his men around the prisoners at the gangway, sought the society of the three mates waiting near the mizzen hatch.

"Pretty hard lot of men, I hear," he remarked to Mr. Becker.

"Rather," answered the first mate, scowling towards the hard lot. "Worst I ever seen. This is their second mutiny, an' there's been gun-play and scrappin' all the voyage."

They certainly looked a hard lot. They were

in rags—more or less unclean—and shivered like coolies in the chill December air. There was bitterness and discontent in their grimy, emaciated faces, and threatening hatred in the eyes that scowled back at the mate.

"Which is Sinful Peck?" asked the ensign, as he eyed the group.

"Guess you must mean Mr. Peck, here," answered the mate, with a grin, nodding towards the small, fat, and smiling third officer. "He shipped 'fore the mast with 'em, but was taken aft."

"I really beg pardon," said the young ensign. "But there is so much indefinite gossip ashore concerning this crew, and—well, the name Sinful Peck stands out strongest."

"Oh, that's all right, sir," said Sinful. "It's a pet name they gave me; but they've got worse themselves. See that big porker near the rail? He's Bigpig Monahan. That's Seldom Helward next him—the one with the grizzled red hair and hook-nose."

"What's the significance of *his* name?" asked the ensign, with a smile.

"Pure satire. All their names fit them. See that miscreant with his collar turned up? That's Moccassey Gill. He's an Indian, all right, but he got his name from a pair o' moccasins he made one hard, cold winter when he had no shoes."

"You seem to know their antecedents."

"Went to school with most of them, sir. When very young they were respectable. See that bull-necked hoodlum by the gangway steps? He's Tosser Galvin—not because he ever tossed a man—because of his facility at tossing in whiskey. And Poopdeck Cahill, that fellow next him—Poopdeck

shipped boy in a schooner when just out of school, and quit her after a trip. Didn't like her, he said—wasn't handy—had no poopdeck. He's dangerous; he nearly killed me on the way here."

"What was the cause of the mutiny?" asked the ensign.

"Pure cussedness," answered Mr. Becker. "They couldn't keep their hands off Mr. Peck, and we put the whole thirteen in leg-irons below decks. But that wasn't what jailed 'em. The skipper'd ha' let 'em out and paid 'em off here, only they captured and disarmed the three of us, one after another—hands were free, you see—and wouldn't let us go. Well, the skipper was squeamish 'bout shootin' men in irons, so all he could do was to starve 'em—and us, too"—Mr. Becker's face took on a grieved expression—"and after two weeks of it they hadn't strength to untie us if they wanted to; but the skipper thought they could still pull a trigger—had our guns, you know—and it kept him on deck. Oh, they'd shoot; they shot me in the leg 'fore they got me." Mr. Becker looked down at, and felt of, a small hole in his trousers.

"They can't be ordinary sailor-men," said the ensign, studying the sullen faces of the mutineers. "Did they infect the rest of the crew?"

"They're *not* ordinary men; they're the worst that ever happened. I wish we were rid of 'em. Infect the rest? No—the rest haven't sand enough to run, let alone fight."

"These are good American citizens," said the second mate, derisively, speaking for the first time; "wealthy business men from Cleveland, who respect the law—townsmen of Mr. Peck."

"Dock-rats and hoodlums," responded Sinful. "I've known them forty years."

The appearance of the captain and deputy-consul interrupted the talk. The latter held two large sheets of paper in his hand, and said to the ensign: "Mr. Belknap, will you bring those men here?"

The ensign marshaled his charges aft to the hatch, where the deputy faced them with the papers unfolded in his hands.

"Men," he said, briskly, "I am directed by the consul-general to investigate this petition sent by you from the jail, in which you complain of cruel and unusual punishment on board this ship. It seems to be in the handwriting of the one who signs the name Captain John Monahan, of Cleveland, Ohio. Who is this *Captain* Monahan?"

"Me," growled the big man. "I'm Captain Monahan on the Lakes—Bigpig Monahan aboard this hell-ship. Is this the way you investigate?—after the ship's ready for sea and we're hauled aboard under guard, like so many convicts?"

"You have been properly investigated. You may be captains at home—"

"We're not—except for three of us; but we've money and pull enough to make some one walk the floor over this business. Did you cable to the mayor of Cleveland for our records, as we requested?"

"We did not. The government's money is not to be wasted on such trumped-up bombast."

"What d'ye suppose the consular service is kept up for, then—to keep you fellows in fat jobs? I tell you"—Bigpig advanced a step, his lips parted angrily, his hand raised warningly—"you and your superiors will have cause to regret your neglect of our case."

"Don't threaten," answered the deputy, stepping back a pace, however. "Whatever grievance you may have against Captain Jackson, for, as you say here"—he glanced at the petition—"taking you forcibly to sea from New York, is nullified by the fact that you signed articles at Singapore for the passage home, stopping at intermediate ports. You are sailors before the mast."

"We're not putting that issue to the front. What we insist upon is that it'll pay you and your boss to consider our standing at home. Sinful"—the big man's voice sounded husky and broken—"aren't you satisfied with your work? We want to get home. You know there's money in this crowd. Tell the truth."

Sinful's face became grave, and he raised his hand dramatically.

"Bigpig, I will speak the truth," he said, and he turned to the deputy. "I also am from Cleveland, sir, and, in my professional capacity, have known these men for years. I can confidently assure you, sir, that, at home, among customary surroundings, there is not a man of them who could not at any time stick his hand in any pocket he's got and—scratch himself."

"You infernal liar," said he of the hooked nose and grizzled red hair. "And I bet ten thousand with you on McKinley."

"No, it was a fool bet, Seldom," said Sinful, calmly, "and I am paying it by making this voyage. The chief of police has their records, sir," he added to the deputy, "not the mayor of Cleveland."

They all turned their eyes upon him; their feet shuffled nervously, and their fingers twitched, as though they longed to reach for him. But none

moved; the presence of armed man-of-war's-men is restraining.

"This is something over which the consular service has no jurisdiction," said the deputy, folding the papers and handing the articles to the captain. "You wish to see this petition?" he asked of the ensign, who had indicated such a wish by extending his hand. "Here, read it." The ensign took it.

"Now, men," went on the deputy, "you have been properly punished for your mutinous conduct, and should feel thankful that you are under a kind and merciful captain, who, instead of demanding the full enforcement of the penalty prescribed for your offense, has consented to take you to an American port. Remember that you are under the stars and stripes, the flag of the free, homeward bound to a land whose laws deny justice to no man, no matter how humble—"

"Rats," interrupted Seldom Helward, explosively, his scowl deeper than usual.

"Well," said the deputy, in some confusion, "I'm through. You know your position."

"Rats, I say," continued Seldom. "You learned that at school. We'll make no appeal to the laws of a country which sanctions slavery at sea and denies to a seaman the right of self-defense. But it's the land o' the dollar, and there'll be an agitation at Washington that will make more than one hunt for tall grass. Now, Captain Jackson," he said, turning to the quiescent skipper, "we're responsible American citizens, shanghaied in your ship by your third mate, and you know it. You've denied our statements, enslaved us, shot at us, ironed us, starved us, and jailed us—all under cover of the law. And through it all you've encouraged your

mates to devil us into resistance that you call mutiny. It won't be the law you'll deal with at home; it'll be the men who make the law. Do you care to discharge us now, so we can go home by steamer, and so save trouble for yourself and loss to your owners?"

XXVII

THE captain's gray eyes grew serious and he did not answer at once; the first and second mate looked interested, as though they might have welcomed such a solution to the problem. But Sinful Peck, with a face perceptibly lengthened, drew near the wavering captain, offering silent admonition to be true to himself and his dignity.

"If I should do so," said the captain, at last, "I should not be influenced by your threats. I neither believe nor disbelieve your statements. Your standing at home cannot conflict with your present position—that of sailors before the mast, who signed my articles at Singapore. You are powerless to make trouble for me at home. But I do believe that you were shanghaied out of New York as a practical joke, and would let this influence me, as well as the fact that in all your troublesome resentment of necessary discipline you have only acted as untrained human beings will always act under fancied injury. Also do I remember that I have always conquered you, and have not failed to punish you as you deserve."

"Hurrah for you, capt'n!" shouted Bigpig, with a smile of amnesty on his rugged face. "We'll call it all off." Then others joined in: "Must be plenty

o' men ashore. We want to get home. Keep Sinful with you; we don't want him—we can fix him up later."

"Will you sign a quit-claim for damages against my owners, and promise never to sign in my ship again? Frankly, I am sick of you. If you can quit my ship without another fight, you can go." The captain finished with a smile.

"Yes, yes," they shouted. "Of course—we want to get home." The last came from several of them.

"You'll have trouble getting men, captain," remarked the deputy, significantly.

"And they're a mighty good crew now, captain," volunteered Sinful; "we'll only have to break in a new bunch."

The captain looked from one to the other, with a little of uncertainty showing in his face. "And if you discharge them, sir," continued Sinful, "they'll consider it weakness and follow you up. Plenty of cheap shysters would take up their case, just to force a compromise."

"No," said the captain, firmly. "If they are dock-rats and hoboes they can't trouble me; if they are responsible men they will keep their word."

"We're responsible enough, captain," they chorused. "We'll stand by what we agreed. We waive all claims. Call off your dogs and let us get ashore."

"I think, captain," said Mr. Belknap, lifting his eyes from the petition, "that their story may be true—that they may be responsible men. I see two names here in brackets, and written against them a firm name which I recognize—Galvin & Company. I have visited Cleveland."

"Have you, sir?" asked Bigpig, joyously. "You may know some of us. Step out here, Tosser, and

be identified." Tosser Galvin emerged from the group.

"I'm John Galvin, sir," he said. "My office is in the Perry-Payne Building. Know me, sir?"

"No. I cannot know you. I merely visited Cleveland five years ago. But, perhaps—well—perhaps you would not mind—under the circumstances. If you are John Galvin of this firm, you were to have been married about twenty years ago, were you not?"

Tosser's face fell. "Yes—I was—almost. Were you there, sir?"

"I heard of the wedding from the people I visited. Did—did anything—"

"No," said Tosser, brazenly, "nothing happened—except the wedding supper. She got cold feet, and skipped out the side door as the parson came in the front."

"I am satisfied," said the ensign, turning to the captain, "that this man is an influential citizen of Cleveland. The lady was my aunt, and the matter was hushed up."

"Now, I beg of you, sir," said Sinful, coming forward with a deprecating shake of his head, "not to be taken in so easily. John Galvin is my best friend, and I was at that unfortunate *contretemps*. This man was there, too, but as a poor relation of Galvin's; his job was to open the door. He cleaned the mud from my shoes and I tipped him a dollar. He made a pile that night and was drunk for a week."

"You damned liar!" yelled Tosser. "You tipped me? I cleaned your shoes?" In an instant he had Sinful by the throat, and the two rolled on the deck together.

All might still have been well—the friction con-

fined to these two—for the state of mind induced by mutual concession tends to leniency and trust; but there was one man there immune to such influences—whose mind could only grasp the fact that an officer was assaulted by a sailor. With his ready brass-knuckles clinched on his fingers, Mr. Becker sprang towards the combatants just in time to collide with another peacemaker—Bigpig Monahan—who, with more amicable intent, and cautionary words to Tosser on his lips, sprang from the opposite direction. Mr. Becker's bull-terrier instincts responded to the collision; he struck Bigpig in the face; then, with a furious imprecation, the big sailor struck back, and another battle was on. Others surrounded the struggling pair on the deck, bent only upon separating them; the deputy sped up the poop-steps; the captain drew his revolver, but for some reason—perhaps the presence of a navy and consular officer—put it away, and armed himself with a belaying-pin from the rail. The ensign waved back his men, who had drawn the heavy navy revolvers with which they were armed, and Mr. Brown, seeing that his superior officer was doing well, and, perhaps with a better understanding than Mr. Becker of the delicacy of the situation, merely gloved himself similarly and waited. Even now the trouble might have spent itself, but the sight of Mr. Becker's well-doing was too much for Seldom Helward. Bigpig's face and fists were bleeding from contact with the brass-knuckles, and he was being forced backward. Seldom joined the fray and knocked the mate to the deck; then he received in his face Mr. Brown's brass-shod fist, and he, too, went down, bleeding. Some of the peacemakers surrounding Tosser and Sinful saw this, and, being sufficiently warmed up and reckless by this

time, they pounced upon the cautious second mate, and the incautious and unconquered first mate as he rose to his feet, and mobbed them. Then the captain's belaying-pin began operations, crashing down indiscriminately on heads and arms; the victims, if able, secured similar clubs, and the fight became general. And, over the sound of oaths and shouts, rang the ensign's orders to his men: "Don't shoot—don't injure a man. Overpower them, and stop it."

There were ten heavily built, muscular, and active navy sailors in that detail, and they were trained to fight with fists as well as with weapons. Man after man went down under their blows—and to the credit of their seamanly sympathy be it said that two were Mr. Becker and Mr. Brown—until the last responsible citizen of Cleveland was put out of commission.

Then they stood up—or sat up, as they could—and looked around ruefully. All were more or less disfigured; a great many were bleeding from cuts in their heads and faces; Sinful Peck, nearly black in the face, was breathing heavily; the other two mates could barely see through their puffed and blackened eyelids, while the captain was feeling of loosened front teeth and spitting blood upon the deck. It was no time for frivolous comment, but the uninjured though pale-faced deputy above must speak.

"By George! Captain Jackson," he said, "I'd pay that crowd off, if I were you—discharge them without characters."

"Pay them off!" sputtered the captain. "Not by a damned sight. I'll land 'em at 'Frisco in irons, by Gawd! Mr. Becker, get that mooring chain down to the 'tween decks this time, and stretch it fore and aft on the midship stanchions. Iron every

damned one o' them by the legs, where we can watch them. Damn a damn fool, anyhow, that'll trust to a sailor's promise."

Expostulations began, but soon subsided, and in twenty minutes they were confined as the captain directed—nearly beneath the mizzen hatch, yet far enough from the notched stanchion used for descent to give a visitor to the 'tween deck immunity from capture. And, as a further precaution, when the last man was ironed, the keys went somewhat ostentatiously into the pocket of the captain, of all on board the man least likely to visit them.

But it was Sinful Peck who had snapped the irons on the ankles of the turbulent thirteen; and this he did with a very earnest, serious expression of face, impressed either with the painfulness of the duty or the possible danger of his proximity to those long arms and powerful fingers—more probably the latter; for when the other victors had climbed to the deck above he lingered behind and smiled at the line of scowling faces, sweetly, benignly, and triumphantly. A few cursed him, but he answered not, and, still smiling, ascended the stanchion.

As he approached the gangway his superiors were bidding good-bye to the deputy-consul and the ensign, and thanking the latter for his assistance—which assistance the young officer was deprecating.

"I feel my position," he said, embarrassedly. "I was bound to deliver them to you, but have meddled too much. Now that you have them in irons, of course it is wisest to keep them there; but, seriously, captain, I think you are over-harsh with them. They may be what they say."

"Not at all, Mr. Belknap," said the deputy. "They are mutineers, pirates, murderers. I was a

witness, captain, and I am going home by the next steamer. I will probably be in San 'Frisco when you arrive, and will gladly testify. Keep them in irons, by all means, captain."

"I certainly shall," said the captain. "They have made it an object with me—a matter of pride"—he felt his loosened teeth—"I shall hand them over to the harbor police at 'Frisco." And, though the condition of his teeth made it painful, he joined Sinful in his smile.

Then he bowed them over the side, and two hours later, when his remnant of a crew had cleared a troublesome "foul hawse," he tripped his anchors, and, with a Shanghai tug at the end of his line, began the long tow down the river.

XXVIII

WHEN a man of his word promises to carry more than half his crew across the Pacific in irons he is apt to make strong endeavor towards the keeping of his promise, even though unfortified by profane and intemperate language arising from below, and by the fact that the mild-mannered and well-behaved remnant of his crew proved their efficiency at shortening sail in a sharp squall which struck the ship before she was well off the Yangtse bank. But the squall was followed by a greasy calm; and two large, sea-going junks, blown nearer by the squall, and filled with yelling, chattering Chinamen, brought into the problem a factor not easily canceled by a crew of twelve weaklings, trained only to fear and obedience, and Captain Jackson could not but have thought of those counter-irritants below. Both junks were being propelled by sweeps, and one was but a quarter-mile away, the other about as far astern of her.

"Pirates?" asked the mate, as he and the captain watched from the poop.

"No doubt of it," answered the captain. "There's a large, anti-foreign society growing in China—Boxers, they're called—and some o' them have taken to the sea. They've killed a lot of missionaries up north, and I heard ashore of a little English bark they looted in the Peiho. We've got to fight. Call all hands aft, Mr. Becker, and we'll fit 'em out. Wish I could trust that gang below."

"We won't need 'em, sir," answered the mate. "Counting in the cook an' steward, Chips an' the

two bosuns, there are twenty of us—good for a hundred Chinks. An' there's wind coming yonder"—he pointed at another squall growing in the west—" an' we can keep 'em off till it comes. They won't face powder an' shot."

" Perhaps not. We may have to kill a few, though."

But they changed their estimate of Chinese courage a little later, even though they killed more than a few. A frenzied mob of suicides swarmed up from the brown junk rasping alongside, and with yells and shrieks precipitated themselves upon the score of men mustered to receive them. They were armed only with knives and spears, and there was a steady death-rate among them as the rifles, pistols, and shot-guns in the hands of the defenders sought targets and spoke; but they charged on, stumbling over the bodies of the fallen, flourishing their blades, and chattering their strange, minor-keyed war-cries, until they had driven the defenders against the opposite rail. Here they closed, and now white men fell to the deck under the knife and spear thrusts. For a moment it was a mêlée; then one man broke, and fled for the cabin door. It was Sinful Peck, and the example was contagious; the steward, carpenter, and one of the boatswains reached the poop-steps and climbed them. Here they turned to defend their temporary refuge, firing point-blank into the densely packed mass of yelling humanity besieging the steps. The second mate was driven into the companionway. The first mate lay quiet in the scuppers. The captain and cook, both bleeding, mounted the hatch house, while the other boatswain and what was left of the foremast hands were harried forward by the fanatical China-

men until they found safety behind the closed doors of the galley. Then the pursuers charged back to aid in the siege of the others, by which time the cook had sunk to his hands and knees, and the carpenter was prone upon his back in the alley on the poop. Piled half-way up the poop-steps was a pile of dead and wounded Chinamen, over which others were frantically climbing, and it began to look hopeless for the defenders, even though the captain on the hatch house, the steward and boatswain in the alley, and the second mate in the companion, were bringing down a Chinaman with each bullet expended. But now a strange thing happened.

A brown, hollow cone, nearly two feet in diameter at its base and fully five feet long, protruded over the break of the poop, its open mouth gaping menacingly at the struggling Chinamen; and from its cavernous interior belched a mighty volume of sound uproarious, awful, and terrifying. The Chinamen fell back, but the horrid resonance followed them, blasting their ear-drums, paralyzing their nerves, threatening their souls. Bullets they understood, but not this—this massive and weighty weapon that hurled thunder at them. And what manner of foreign devil was behind it, squatting on his haunches, supporting the ponderous thing so easily with one hand gripped around the small end, which he held to his mouth, while he puffed out his cheeks and made frightful faces. They surged back; they turned and fled in wild panic, and as the leaders in the stampede scrambled over the rail, the powerful foreign devil, with his dreadful instrument of evil still aimed at them—still emitting the fearful sounds, sprang clear over the bodies to the main-deck and pursued them.

It was Sinful Peck with the ship's papier-mâché megaphone, and he did not cease his objurgations until he had blown the last Celestial over the side.

Captain Jackson inspected his cook—badly hurt, but not fatally—then, being weak from loss of blood, lowered himself painfully to the deck and examined the others. Five of the foremost hands were wounded and more or less helpless; and Mr. Becker was dead, with a knife sticking in his breast.

Assisted by the steward, he climbed to the poop, crossed over abaft the cabin, and looked down at the junk. Sinful Peck, perched on the rail, was still bombarding them with ear-splitting invective, and the Chinamen, having cast off, were frantically pushing their junk away with bamboo poles. Forward, Mr. Brown was hammering on the galley door, beseeching the inmates to "come out like men, and stand by for more of it." For more of it was promised; the other junk was but a few lengths away, and the yells of her crew attested the fact that Sinful's noise was not yet affecting them.

"It needs to be sudden and mysterious," muttered the captain. "It won't do again." He looked to the west, where the second squall was growing, and bearing down upon them—a black and ragged cloud, its lower edge dropping rain. It was a question—which would arrive first, the wind or the Chinamen.

"Come here, Mr. Peck," he called, and as the smiling Sinful approached he tossed him the keys of the irons. "Unlock the prisoners," he said. "Those curs forrard won't fight any more, and we'll need them to shorten down if for nothing else."

The smile on Sinful's face gave way to a look of consternation; but he deposited the megaphone on

the deck, picked up the keys, and, first reloading a few empty cylinders in his pistol, resolutely entered the hatch-house door and descended. Captain Jackson sat down on the edge of the poop with his feet on the steps, and waited. He heard muffled words from below, then there was silence, broken only by the objurgations of Mr. Brown and the noise of the Chinamen. Soon a shock head appeared in the hatch-house door, and Bigpig Monahan's massive shoulders and powerful frame followed. He sprang out and faced the captain, with Sinful's pistol leveled at his head, Sinful's cartridge-belt strapped around him, and a stern look of indignation on his face. Seldom Helward came next, then Moccassey Gill, Gunner Meagher, Tosser Galvin, and the rest. They all looked angry and discontented, and they all procured belaying-pins from the rail and swarmed around their leader.

XXIX

"DON'T shoot, Monahan," the captain said, weakly raising his hand. "I am knifed again in the side. You'll have enough to do in defending your lives. We have been attacked by pirates."

"So we surmised down there, by the racket," answered Bigpig. "And rather than call on us you left us to be murdered in irons. What d'ye want of us now?"

"As I said, to defend yourselves. At first, there seemed to be no need of you; then there was no time to think of you. Mr. Becker is dead. The crew have hidden in the galley. Mr. Brown is still with me, and Mr. Peck—where is Mr. Peck?"

"Down below with the darbies on him. How d'ye s'pose I got this gun?"

"Well, well—all right. I am helpless. The situation is in your hands; but the Chinamen are coming back"—he arose and pointed to the masts of the junks showing over the rail—"and there is a squall coming which may blow us clear of them. You'd better brace the yards to starboard, clew up the kites, and arm yourselves."

He sank down again in his weakness, and they scrambled up the rail and looked; then they craned their necks and looked at the coming squall.

"All right, skipper," said Bigpig, as they stepped down. "You're a good fellow when you're scared. But just hand over that gun o' yours." He climbed the steps and boldly twisted the captain's pistol from his nerveless fingers. Handing it to Seldom

Helward, he asked: "Now, where are those arms you spoke of?"

"On these wounded men, and on the men in the galley. Take them away from them; but brace the yards first and you may not need them."

They gave no heed to the last advice; they relieved the stricken men on the deck of their arms and cartridges, and, meeting an anxious second mate hurrying aft, they even held him up, disarmed him, and tied him hand and foot in the scuppers. Then, with the heavy iron windlass brakes, they battered in the galley door and entered. Captain Jackson saw this with failing eyesight; also he heard a confused sound of oaths and protestations from within the galley, which for a moment dominated the chattering yells from over the side. These were ominously near, however, and he could see through the quarter-rail that the two junks had met, and side by side were now coming together. He endeavored to stand erect and look over the house at the squall, but the effort was too much for his strength and he sank down in a faint.

He was roused by cold rain on his face, and a stentorian voice, almost in his ear, roaring: "Bring her up a little and shake her, Moccassey; the topsails won't come down." Bigpig Monahan had partly climbed the poop-steps, his huge head and shoulders dimly outlined against a background of gray sky streaked with horizontal rain and spindrift. The ship was heeled, and her tautened weather rigging sang a dismal accompaniment to the sound of wind and washing sea. Aloft, skysails, royals, and one of the top-gallant sails were in ribbons, and the upper topsails, with slackened halyards, supported the weight of their heavy yards

by the pressure of wind alone. This much the captain's mind could grasp in an instant.

"The Chinaman, Monahan?" he gasped.

"Left 'em astern, skipper—dismasted," said Bigpig, cheerily.

"And the second mate?"

"In the scuppers, damn him. We're shortening down without him."

It was moderately good news under the circumstances, and with the formless, wordless calls of sailors at work ringing in his ears, Captain Jackson sank back into unconsciousness. When next he revived he was in his berth; his wound was dressed, and Bigpig, Seldom, Moccassey, Tosser, and Poopdeck were seated in the sacred precincts, calmly watching him. All bore weapons of some kind. Standing up before them were Mr. Brown and Sinful Peck, unrestrained of movement, but evidently prisoners.

"Well, capt'n," said Bigpig, serenely. "You've come to again, I see. Now, your ship's all right, and heading her course for 'Frisco. We've talked it over. There's no sense in putting back to Shanghai, or in touching at Honolulu, as we thought we'd do, at first. We'd be hanged, no doubt, for piracy; but we'll take our chance in the Lord's country. Understand? We don't mean to give up these guns, and we don't mean to let you have any; for our own safety—understand? That'll be our plea in court, if any plea is needed. And we give you back your second mate, and agree to take his orders and yours, as lawfully signed seaman of this ship. We keep our hands clean of all mutiny and such things—except, as I said, retaining these guns for self-protection. But we want this little devil 'fore

the mast with us again, and we want you legally to disrate him right here."

"You want him," said the captain, "to maltreat him as you did before. Mr. Peck saved my life. I cannot deliver him to you."

"We saved your life, too, and we saved your ship. If we hadn't braced the yards she'd be afire now, and you roasting with your throat cut."

"But you are under as heavy obligations to him. He remembered a well-known weakness of the Chinese character, and frightened them into their junk with the megaphone. Had he not done this you would have been killed, too."

"Oh, he's smart enough—smart enough to shanghai his friends and manage things so that at no time can they quit this ship and get home. Well, you formally disrate him, or we'll head the ship south."

There were mutiny, murder, piracy, wrecking, and all the crimes in the nautical calendar inherent in this threat; and Bigpig spoke determinedly. The set faces of the others bore out this interpretation, and the captain remained silent for a few moments.

"I am laid up," he said. "I cannot be on deck. I have no navigator. Will you allow Mr. Peck to navigate and keep the log?"

"Most certainly not! He'll keep the fo'castle clean. Why, bless your soul, capt'n! are you looking for mates? This crowd don't need a boss, and if they did, Seldom and I have been ship-masters for twenty years or so; and as for navigation, Poopdeck, here, took a ship 'round the Horn for you thirty years back. Forgotten that? Poopdeck, old man, can you fetch 'Frisco?"

"Ought to," answered Poopdeck, confidently.

"Once past the Loochoo Islands, there isn't a rock or shoal this side of the Farallones."

The captain again waited, and thought.

"Mr. Peck," he said, at last, to the silent and sullen-faced little man, "I can do no differently. You must go before the mast. And Mr. Brown," he added, to the second mate, "as you are not a navigator, I must promote a man over your head. Mr. Poopdeck Cahill, you may bring your dunnage aft to the mate's room and take his place."

"Thank you, sir," said Poopdeck. "Will you enter this in your official log?"

"Of course, of course—anything for peace. Get out of my cabin."

"Come, Sinful, my son," said Bigpig, gleefully, clapping him forcefully on the shoulder. "Come with the friends of your youth."

And with Sinful heading them at the end of Bigpig's long arm, they filed out of the cabin.

XXX

MR. BROWN, the second mate, was a limited man, efficient, of course, in his sphere, but restricted in range of view—unable to adjust himself to peculiar conditions. To him a sailor was a sailor, a man to be kept at work and spoken to with stern emphasis; a captain a captain, to be addressed deferentially and called from sleep when top-gallant sails came in. It mattered little that the sailor carried a gun, or that he held his own position by reason of the sailor's respect for the amenities; while his orders were obeyed cheerfully and intelligently he forgot the existence of the gun, and, when he received orders from the captain, ignored the fact that they were mere suggestions, such as the sailor might approve of as working for the general good. That the sailor might refuse to obey, or that the captain might not try to enforce an order, was not within the scope of his code of ethics. Even Sinful Peck's status was beyond the reach of this hide-bound creed. As third mate Sinful had been entitled to consideration; now, disrated and before the mast with his enemies, he was a sailor, to be treated accordingly. So, in this shipful of warring interests, centering only in a common wish to drive the vessel to San Francisco as soon as possible, Mr. Brown was most certainly foredoomed to trouble. It came to him on a bright forenoon a few days after the men had taken charge, when the ship, under whole sail, was riding easily over the long Pacific swell, and the watch, having just braced the yards at his roaring behest,

had resought the sunny spots of the deck to rest themselves. So far, no work but the morning washing down and the trimming of sail had been attempted since the mutiny; but Mr. Brown's keen eye, casually detecting a few coils of the mizzen-topsail brace lying on the deck, and as, according to his creed—which was to him also the will of Providence—ropes should be coiled up after belaying, he bawled out to the men: "Lay aft here, one o' you, and coil up that gear."

A man—it was Tosser Galvin—came aft to the main-rigging, looked down at the rope, looked up at Mr. Brown at the head of the poop-steps, faced forward—the action bringing to view the butt of a pistol in his hip-pocket—and when he had bitten off the end of a tobacco plug, called to his mates: "Send the spit-kid aft."

There was a commotion among them, and out from the group, propelled by the toe of a large boot, shot the small and fat Sinful. He waddled along the deck with as meek an expression of countenance as is compatible with a red and swollen nose shadowed by a blackened eye and an elevated chin—elevated, presumably, to lift his damaged but still sensitive nose an inch or two farther from the burden he carried on his chest. This was a "spit-kid," or forecastle cuspidor—the lower half of a bucket—and it was slung to his neck by a piece of spun yarn. As he brought up before Tosser the latter spat in the receptacle, pointed to the rope on the deck, and looked over his shoulder at Mr. Brown with an ironical, quizzical scowl that was peculiarly exasperating; then he walked forward, and Sinful coiled the brace on the pin.

But, the rope being wet and stiff, the coils came

down again, just after Sinful had turned to go forward; and Mr. Brown, whose face had darkened at Tosser's insolence, but whose creed was abortive in the presence of his gun, sprang down the steps after Sinful, who had no gun, and chided him in a most officerly manner.

"All right, Mr. Brown—all right, sir," answered Sinful, smiling under the abuse, as he returned to the rope; "but I didn't see it come down again. There, sir—how's that?" He jammed the coils down between the others on the pin, and turned to the irate officer. "I think I can guarantee that it will stay up now, sir, and you can rest your soul in peace. Is there anything else I can do for you, sir? Do you desire to expectorate?"

He walked his odorous burden up to Mr. Brown. The speech and the action were insolent in the extreme, yet hardly warranted the violence of Mr. Brown's response. With an oath on his lips he drew back his fist, launched forward, and felled the little man to the deck. The contents of the cuspidor scattered far and wide.

"Now," roared the angry Mr. Brown, "go forrard, and get a draw-bucket, and clean up this muss —and don't have any lip about it, neither."

An uproar of heartless laughter had applauded the feat; but the men forward were not the only spectators. Captain Jackson had climbed to the top of the after-house with his sextant, and had posted himself in a patch of sunlight for the mid-day observation, when the noise from below attracted his attention. As Sinful scrambled to his feet he called the second mate up to him. Mr. Brown came, and faced a man angrier than himself.

"Damn you," said the captain, in almost a whis-

per, so as not to be heard by the man at the wheel, "if I wasn't so cut and slashed and weak that I can hardly bear my own weight, I'd break your fool head for this. Do you still recognize my authority as lawful master o' this ship?"

"Why, yes, capt'n!" said the astonished second mate. "But why—what—why, sir—"

"Why—what—why," repeated the captain, hoarsely. "What'd you hit him for? He saved my life once. D'you think I forget it? You've made three parts o' the trouble I've had with this crew by not knowing when to let 'em alone. Now, I can't prevent those men from abusing Peck, but, by Gawd! I'll prevent you."

"But he gave me lip, sir; and he's 'fore the mast now. You disrated him—"

"Under compulsion, you damned idiot. And d'you think, if they wanted you and me 'fore the mast they couldn't have their way?—with every gun on board in their hands? But they haven't taken away my authority over you. Get down there, take that draw-bucket from Peck, and clean up that muss yourself."

For strict accordance with, and dependence upon, Mr. Brown's creed, Captain Jackson had said too much—he should not have admitted his helplessness just before ordering a limited second mate to menial duty. Mr. Brown looked at him with wide-open eyes; then at Sinful Peck coming aft on the main deck with a draw-bucket, the dragging lanyard of which, in the hands of Tosser Galvin, was coming down on his back and shoulders as a whip. Though he shrank under the castigation he smiled meekly. Behind Tosser, flocking along like schoolboys scenting a row, each with pistol, rifle, or shot-

gun strongly in evidence, were the rest of the starboard watch.

"Did you hear what I told you?" said the captain, in a white heat of passion, "or do you want to class in with those mutineers?"

What may have been of later disadvantage in such a classification may not have appealed to Mr. Brown's illogical mind. One of the mutineers had just tripped and pushed Sinful so that he rolled on the deck. Mr. Brown already classed in with them in antagonism to Sinful. Still he temporized.

"Capt'n," he said, "I hit that little devil for givin' lip, as I've hit him before—dozens o' times. He shot me off Singapore, and I never squared that up. He shipped 'fore the mast, and I shipped second mate, but you made him a pet and took him aft—"

"As I chose to," stormed the captain. "And by the same authority I send you 'fore the mast. Get down off this house. Take your dunnage out o' that room. If I stand alone in this ship, I'm her skipper, by Gawd! as far as you're concerned."

Captain Jackson no longer suppressed his voice; not only the man at the wheel, but the men beneath on the main-deck, could hear plainly; they ceased attentions to Sinful and looked up inquiringly, while Sinful picked up himself and the fallen drawbucket, and the observant helmsman sang out derisively: "John Brown, come out o' the house—come out o' the house, John Brown."

The irreverent speech could hardly have influenced Mr. Brown. But here was an unjust captain bent upon humiliating him, and down below a reckless, rollicking crowd of men whose souls were full of hatred for this captain, and whose present mission in life seemed the tormenting of Sinful Peck,

the cause of his trouble. They would welcome him; but he would make the last stand of the defeated and dethroned.

"All right," he grumbled. "I'll go forrard all right, but I'm damned if that fat son of a thief don't obey my last order."

XXXI

HE swung himself over the house-rail to the alley, and descended the poop-steps; then he made a run towards Sinful, caught him as he was climbing the rail with the bucket, and pulled him down.

"What ye sogerin' about?" he thundered in his ear. "Didn't I tell you to clean up this deck? Hey? What ye sogerin' about?"

He had raised his fist to strike the small man again, but did not. Sinful's limits of endurance were reached. "Let go," he shouted, angrily. "Damn you, let go." Then he wriggled out of the assailant's grasp, and with the bucket rope still in his hand, sprang back. The men crowded around, voicing approval and encouragement—some to Mr. Brown, some to Sinful; but all of it lacked sympathy.

"If I'm to be hammered to death," yelled Sinful, swinging the heavy, water-soaked bucket around his head, "I don't care who I kill first." He let the bucket fly, and it struck the misguided Mr. Brown squarely in the chest, knocking him back, and down. The men yelled their delight.

"Go it, Sinful," they said. "Go for him, Brown—don't take that from a 'foremast hand—get another draw-bucket—fight it out with buckets."

"Keep back, all of you," screamed the enraged Sinful, swinging his missile again. "Let me alone, you damned Indians." They laughingly gave him room.

"Hold on there, Sinful," called a voice from the cabin door. "Drop the bucket. Mr. Brown, keep your hands off that man; he's our meat." Mr. Brown, who had arisen, halted on his way towards Sinful, and looked around, while Sinful, letting the bucket fall to the deck, called out:

"Poopdeck, if you've any authority whatever over these brutes, use it, or, by Heavens! I'll do murder. I can give and take a practical joke, but I won't stand much more of this."

"None in your case, Sinful," said Poopdeck, "and if I had it I wouldn't use it." He crowded through the group of men, a quadrant in his hand. "Your record's bad. You should have thought o' this before. Now you must take what comes. Who made this muss on the deck?" Poopdeck looked around at the men.

"Mr. Brown made it," said Sinful.

"Peck made it," said Mr. Brown.

"They both did it," declared one of the men.

"He knocked me down," said Sinful, vehemently, "and the cuspidor which my dear friends and townsfellows hung to my neck was spilled."

"Mr. Cahill," called the captain from the monkey-rail above them, "Peck speaks the truth. I have ordered my second mate, who is still under my authority, to clean up the deck himself. On his refusing I have ordered him before the mast. As acting first mate, will you see that my orders are carried out?"

"Most certainly, skipper," answered Poopdeck, with a smile, and he turned to Mr. Brown. "You

bear this!" he added. "You're fore the mast from this on."

"Yes, I'm one o' you," said the disgraced officer. "And you hear that, capt'n," he called upward, shaking his fist. "I'm one o' this crowd now. Just look out how you handle me." Then he looked around at his brethren with a fraternal, though sickly, smile on his seamy face. But no answering smile welcomed him.

"Who the hell made you one of us?" asked Peter Gahan, in a tone of disgust. "You'll pull ropes with us at the tail end, and you'll do as you're told by any man aboard except Sinful, but you class with him, not us."

"That's right," said others. "They're a pair. Let 'em both clean the deck."

"Take hold o' that bucket," commanded Peopdeck, "and help Sinful."

"Bear a hand there, Brown," they shouted. "Get to work. Go get a broom, Sinful." Sinful procured a broom from the rack in the hatch house, while Brown—Mister no longer—looked blackly around at the scowling faces and mounted the rail with the draw-bucket. Then, as he and his late victim began washing down the deck, the men went forward, and Peopdeck climbed to the top of the house with his quadrant. He found the captain, pale of face, seated supinely on the skylight.

"Mr. Cahill," he said, weakly, "I must depend upon your observation this noon. I cannot stand up. I cannot retain my strength after any excitement."

"All right, skipper," answered Peopdeck, seeking a position where he would not need to turn his back upon the captain while sighting the sun. Fail-

ing in this, he removed a pistol from a hip to a front pocket of his trousers; for captains, deprived of authority, are prone to be tricky. Noticing the transfer, Captain Jackson said, petulantly:

"You needn't be afraid of me now. My first mate is dead, my second disrated. I stand alone. All I want is to get to 'Frisco quickly."

"Where you hope to jail us for mutiny, eh?" answered Poopdeck, squinting through the sights of his quadrant. "Well, we're just as anxious; and if you haven't blood enough to stand up with, it's your own fault. There are six or seven men in their bunks forward worse off than you; but if you'd let us out of irons in time the pirates wouldn't have got aboard at all, and no one would have been hurt—What's the matter with you?"

The captain, in endeavoring to rise, had fallen to the deck. Poopdeck assisted him to the skylight and asked, "Want the steward?"

"I would like to talk with Peck. He is a skilled physician—and I don't seem to get well."

"Sinful," called Poopdeck over the monkey-rail, "let Brown finish that job, and come up here."

Sinful soon appeared, quite recovered from his late rage, but resembling anything but a skilled physician. Both eyes were black now, and he was dripping wet.

"Pardon my disheveled appearance, gentlemen," he said, suavely. "My new friend and co-worker has a hard fist and a harder heart. He threw a bucket of water over me as I was leaving him. And my dear friends forward think it a splendid joke. Hear them laughing yet."

"Attend to the skipper," said Poopdeck, sternly.

Sinful examined pulse and tongue, then said:

"You want nothing but rest, quiet, and nourishing food, captain—though, if I can have access to the medicine-chest, I can fix you up a tonic."

"You'd better keep away from the medicine-chest," said the listening Peepdeck. "You dosed up a dose of prickly heat for us that kept us aboard at Manila."

"It was a contagious skin-disease that you must have acquired at Singapore," said Sinful. "The health officer so diagnosed it."

"It was croton oil in the water you washed our clothes in," said Peepdeck, hotly. "Now shut up." He took another sight at the sun, and Sinful shook with silent glee.

"Do you deny me the benefit of Peck's knowledge of drugs, Mr. Cahill?" asked the captain, with dignity.

"No—no—provided he takes nothing forward."

"But do you deny me the benefit of the medicine-chest?" asked Sinful. "If I must carry that cuspidor around much longer, I will be the sickest man aboard. I have a splitting headache now."

Peepdeck lowered his quadrant and called "eight bells" to the helmsman. When the bell was struck aft and repeated forward, he looked down into the little man's face and said: "Swallow the whole medicine-chest. Poison yourself if you can."

"Thank you," answered Sinful, quietly. "I really am telling the truth. I am ill."

Peepdeck went below to work out the latitude, and Sinful followed, returning soon with the tonic he had recommended to the captain. He worked his lips as he handed it over, as though there was a bad taste in his mouth.

"Quinine's bitter stuff to take straight, captain."

he said. "But I suppose I'm lucky to get it in any way. I'm having hard times forward."

"How are they treating you?" asked the captain.

"Inhumanly, captain. Besides carrying the cuspidor and trotting up to each man who wants to expectorate, I must do all the menial work of the two forecastles, wash their clothes, and act as punching-bag when they want exercise."

"Can't you dope them, and get hold of a gun or two?"

"Not easily, sir. They won't let me near the grub, nor into the forecastle alone. They throw my meals out on deck to me, and I sleep on the carpenter-shop floor with my patients. One man is detailed to watch me at night."

"How is the carpenter getting on, and the cook, and the rest?"

"Fairly well, sir. They'll all recover in time. One of the gang attends to the cooking, you know, and when my duties permit I bandage the patients —but not much longer, I'm afraid. I've a chill on me now, and have a bad tongue—examined it in Chips' mirror this morning. Look at it, sir." He extended his tongue; it was thickly coated.

XXXII

THE captain smiled meaningly. "A physician," he said, "and a lawyer, besides being a sailor! Have you been an actor, too?"

Sinful's reply was silenced by the sudden presence of Poopdeck Cahill. He appeared at the head of the steps just in time to hear the last few words and see the protruding tongue, and sternly ordered the confab closed.

"Yes, you're a pretty good actor," he said to the retreating Sinful; "you can make your tongue look as you like, and you can simulate any symptoms of any disease known to you; but you can't fool this crowd any more. Just you try any soldiering if you dare."

He followed him down the steps, and forward, while the captain painfully descended to his dinner. When he came up at one bell he saw the whole crew lounging about the forward deck, smoking and laughing. Among them, Brown and Sinful moved as they were called or beckoned, side by side, with arms lashed together, and the cuspidor slung to their necks.

"Harnessed to a man who hates him more than they do," muttered the captain. "But while he has the run of the medicine-chest, I'll trust him to outwit them yet."

A little later, Tosser Galvin came aft and announced himself elected second mate in place of Mr. Brown. Poopdeck gravely introduced Mister Galvin to Captain Jackson.

"Not that I'm the best man for the berth, capt'n,"

he said, in mock seriousness, "nor that anyone else wants it; nor that in this government of the crew, *by* the crew, *for* the crew, a second mate is needed; nor is it kindly to stand your watch for you, for you deserve no particular consideration. But I want to remove myself from the vicinity of Sinful Peck. I can't pass him without slugging him, and the habit grows. I fear I will kill him. I am going home, to my family and my business, and I want no complications with the police."

"And do you think you will escape them?" asked the skipper. "For depriving me of command each of you is liable to a heavy fine and from two to ten years in prison."

"Not in the glorious land of the dollar, captain," answered Tosser, with a grin; "and if you argue on technicalities, we haven't deprived you of command. We've simply deprived you of your guns. *You* disrated your officers."

"You are mutinous sailors, just the same," said the captain, doggedly.

"Now, skipper," said Poopdeck, good-humoredly, "get that notion out of your head. You've too much faith in that little devil's description of us—dock-rats and hoboes. He saved your life, and you're fond of him; that's admitted. But can't you read him yet? He's a shrewd, brainy lawyer, who had been a physician, and before that a seaman. He's gifted with a peculiar sense of humor which impelled him to shanghai his friends when he shipped on his fool bet, and exert every energy since to make them finish the voyage with him. Well—he's succeeded, but he isn't happy; neither is his dear friend Brown, if I'm a judge of human nature. Look at them."

They looked just in time to see Brown, his free hand on Sinful's throat, choking and shaking him as vigorously as their bonds permitted. The men applauded hilariously; but when Sinful fell helplessly to the deck, a large man stepped leisurely towards them, lifted Sinful to his feet, and wagged a big forefinger in Brown's face.

"Bigpig's too damned soft-hearted," said Tosser, in a tone of disgust. "Why shouldn't one dog worry another? It's their nature."

"But you wouldn't tie two dumb brutes together," said the captain, in a rage. "By Gawd! if I'd known this I'd ha' kept Brown aft, where I could control him."

"Captain," said Poopdeck, coldly, "you're excited. Better go below and quiet your nerves."

But the hard-hearted Tosser and the cold-hearted Poopdeck partly redeemed themselves a few moments later. Captain Jackson left them, not to go below, but to go forward, where he shook his fist in Brown's face and used language unbecoming one deprived of authority, for which the limited Brown knocked him down.

"The contemptible cur," exclaimed Poopdeck, "to hit a wounded man!"

"Let's kick the lungs out of him," snarled Tosser; and the two leaped off the poop and ran forward. But the others were ahead of them. Mr. Brown was already disconnected from Sinful when they arrived, and hard fists and heavy boots were impinging upon various parts of his anatomy with all the force that strong and indignant men could give them, while his yells of pain troubled the air. The huge Bigpig stopped the punishment before these yells grew too faint, and then said, sternly, to the

captain, who had picked himself up and was leaning against a water-tank:

"Now, Jackson, you'll possibly see a good deal going on here that you won't approve of, but we won't have you interfering—understand? We're not ill-treating you, and we won't have you struck when you're sick; and you can take your ship into 'Frisco, nominally in command; but until then, *we're* in command. Now, go aft, where you belong."

Brown, not able, or not willing, to move, was being bundled into the carpenter-shop, and his bearers were jocularly commenting on his bad taste. Captain Jackson went aft, followed by Tosser and Poopdeck. They met at the forward cabin door.

"You understand the situation, captain," said Poopdeck, gravely. "The wrong done us by that fat little devil cannot be righted by means of any legal procedure on shore; and coals of fire would cool on his head. As for Brown—I don't think he'll hit you again."

"Have you left me any authority at all," asked the captain, weakly, as he leaned for support against the house—"over Brown? He's not one of you. If I have that authority, I order him in irons for striking me."

"You disrated him, captain, and you have no authority over anyone forward. Besides, Brown is a help to us."

"To help you torture Peck," responded the captain, in a tone which indicated the animus of his suggestion to iron Brown. "I don't care to witness it. He went overboard after me in a gale. Take care of the ship; I shall stay below."

He turned to enter the cabin, but paused at the sight of Sinful approaching from forward. Sinful

walked languidly, and his face, where not disfigured by red, black, and blue spots, was white and drawn; his eyes were dull, his lips were parted, and his shoulders drooped as he walked. He was a picture of utter misery, but his spirit was unbroken.

"I have another patient, gentlemen," he said. "I am after arnica and plaster bandages from the medicine-chest. Though I would that the cup should pass from me, I must nurse Mr. Brown. With care and attention he will be able to assist at the cuspidor to-morrow; but by that time I fear there will be a second vacancy."

Poopdeck closely scanned his face, and said: "You have free permission to poison yourself, Sinful, but not too quickly. What are you dosing yourself with?"

"Quinine, you inhuman Comanche," retorted Sinful. "I've a bad chill, and there'll be a febrile reaction to-morrow; but don't fancy I'll think of suicide."

A shaking of weather leeches attracted Poopdeck's attention, and he and Tosser left them to brace the yards.

"I am utterly powerless, Peck, and can't help you," said the captain, with a weary smile on his own pale face as he turned from him; "but you're doing well—you *may* hoodwink them." Then he entered the cabin, and Sinful stared blankly after him before following. Coming down the poop-steps and looking hard at him was Poopdeck, who, unseen by the captain, must have heard his last remark.

"Here, you—come out o' that." Sinful came. "You look too innocent," continued Poopdeck. "Keep away from that medicine-chest, and come

to me for what you want. Lend a hand on the main-brace."

"I want arnica and plaster, as I said," responded Sinful, "and quinine for myself. I don't know what ails me." His tone was as innocent as his face.

"I know what ails you," said Poopdeck, harshly. "Get to work."

Sinful went forward, and applied no more for access to the medicine. When questioned at the close of the day, he said, wearily: "I want nothing until I can diagnose my symptoms. Quinine does not relieve them. As for Brown—nurse him yourselves." And upon Brown's emphatic declaration, delivered painfully between thickened lips, that he did not want his ministrations, they relieved him of this duty.

XXXIII

TWENTY-FOUR hours is a long time for a skipper, even one deprived of active command, to remain off the deck; and on the next afternoon Captain Jackson appeared; but what he saw sent him back. It was not the gray waste of sea and sky or the charging combers that hammered his ship, for she was in ballast and rode them easily; nor was it the ship-shape condition of his spars and top-hamper; his trained ear had noted all the morning the progress of shortening sail, and the confident ring and twang to roaring orders apprised him that all was going well. The vessel was hove to under reefed topsails; men in oil-skins, belted and armed, paced up and down under the shelter of the weather rail; a few were coiling up the lately used foretopsail halyards and braces. Poopdeck and Tosser, equipped like the rest, stood in the weather alley, staring into the storm; and the helmsman held the kicking wheel with one hand. The ship was in good hands, and, sick man that he was, his presence could be dispensed with. But, down in the lee scuppers was the sight that drove him down, cursing to himself. Sinful, flat on his back on the slanting deck, with his right wrist manacled to Brown's left, was being kicked vigorously by the latter to induce him to rise. The captain's last glimpse showed him his friend being dragged bodily by the rejuvenated Brown up to the shelter of the weather rail, with the cuspidor hanging between them. He remained in his room until visited at nightfall by Poopdeck.

"Wish you'd come forward, capt'n," said the

mate, with a little of doubt in his face and voice, "and take a look at Sinful."

"What's the matter with him?"

"Well, he's talking to himself. We've put him in the carpenter-shop. But we don't want to carry this thing too far."

"You don't?" sneered the captain. "No, you're willing to torture him until he might wish for death, but you don't want him to die. You don't want actual murder on your souls. Well, I tell you"—the captain raised his voice—"get out of it the best way you can. I would rather see him dead than suffering as he does, and I know he would rather die. The man is sick, and he told you so in my presence."

"Now, skipper, you know better than that," expostulated the uneasy Poopdeck. "You know as well as I do that he's drugged himself to play off sick. But he needs an antidote now."

"Well, let him alone and he'll find one."

Poopdeck left the cabin, and the captain remained below until the following morning, when he stepped out through the forward companion. The gale had passed, and the ship was riding along under full sail. Forward, the watch was drying the wet deck, and among them worked Brown—alone. Poopdeck and Tosser stood near the companion, and, as the captain appeared, Bigpig joined them from forward.

"He's coming 'round all right," said the latter. "Damned feverish and delirious until about half an hour ago, when he quieted down. He'll all broken out in a pimply rash on the forehead, and it's spreading. The dope coming out through the skin, I s'pose. But the cripples don't want him among them. S'pose we put him in the 'tween deck?"

"No," objected Poopdeck. "What's the use of two hospitals? There's nothing infectious."

"There might be," said the captain, impulsively. "Perhaps I have more knowledge of these things than you. I'll see him."

"You won't," said Poopdeck, placing himself before the captain. "You missed your chance last evening when, I admit, we were worried. He's all right now, and when he's able to stand, the circus begins again."

"But the eruption," began the captain, "for your own—"

"He's sound asleep, and'll soon wake up and peep for his breakfast," interrupted Bigpig. "I told you, skipper, we'd have no meddling."

"But if there is infection in my ship," exclaimed the captain, explosively, "and if Peck, my best friend on earth—"

"Go into your cabin and remain there," said Poopdeck, sternly. "Remain there until we call you out. Go—and don't force us to action."

The other two closed up beside Poopdeck, and the captain regarded their threatening eyes. He turned and entered the cabin.

There he remained, a prisoner of state, denied even the services of his steward, and receiving his meals from the tarry hands of a sailor, for two days more, when Poopdeck's angry voice shouted down the after-companion: "Might as well come up; you'll be interested."

He ascended to the deck. Seaman-like, his first glance was aloft, and at the monkey-gaff on the mizzen he saw the small flags of the International Signal Code which made up his ship's number. The maintop sail was backed, and about a quarter-mile away on the heaving blue lay a white cruiser with

the American flag at the stern. Poopdeck and Tosser stood near the wheel, the rest of the mutineers amidships.

"The jig's up, skipper," said Poopdeck, as he handed him the binoculars and pointed to a number of white-clad men clearing away a boat. "That's the same fellow that lay at Shanghai with us."

"Good!" answered the captain, with a delighted smile, as he took the glasses. "But how, may I ask, or why, did you let him know how much I needed him?"

A look of hearty disgust and chagrin came to Poopdeck's face in spite of his effort at self-control; but neither he nor Tosser answered the question.

"And how is Peck—dead or alive?" asked the captain, still smiling.

"About the same, skipper," answered Poopdeck. "Out of his head, and the pimples are bigger, that's all. Come, Tosser, we don't belong on the poop."

"Wait," said the smiling skipper. "If he's out of his head he can't apply the antidote. As the boat hasn't started, supposed we signal for a surgeon to come along. Have I your permission?"

"The jig's up, I told you," answered Poopdeck. "Suit yourself."

"I'll do that much for the little cuss," said Tosser, turning back to a pile of flags near the companion. "Give me the letters, captain."

"F.C.D.," answered the captain, after inspecting the signal-book, which lay on the house.

Tosser ran up the letters as he hauled down the number, and an affirmative answer appeared on the cruiser's signal-yard. Then Tosser followed his fellow-officer down to the main-deck, where they joined their disquieted townsmen amidships.

XXXIV

"WE thought there was something wrong, captain," said Mr. Belknap, one of a couple of officers who preceded the boat's crew up the side ten minutes later. "When over a dozen men muster on the top-gallant forecastle of a Yankee ship at ten in the morning—all smoking pipes—we get suspicious. And I see"—he glanced at the group amidships—"that everybody carries side-arms but yourself. What has happened?"

"A fight with Boxer pirates on the coast," answered the captain, "in which I was forced to release my mutineers. Then, having arms, and with my mate killed, they controlled the situation. They have just released me."

"Um-humph. State-prison offense, that," said the officer. "By the way—pardon me. This is Dr. Fleming. You signaled for a surgeon." The captain shook hands with the surgeon.

"I did. I have a competent mate in the carpenter-shop who drugged himself into sickness to escape their persecution. I think he overdosed himself."

"I'll see him," said the surgeon, turning away. He beckoned to a couple of the boat's crew as he passed them, and together they moved forward.

"Now, what do you want to do, captain?" asked the officer. "Send them aboard our ship in irons? What, then, will you do for a crew? We are short-handed."

"No; decidedly no," answered Captain Jackson, warmly; "disarm them for me, and get Mr. Peck

out of their hands. With arms, I'll sail these devils into hell and out again."

"We can do that, captain. Muster them aft."

They came at the captain's call, sober-faced and dogged, and piled their weapons on the booby-hatch at his command.

"You can make Honolulu in a day or two," suggested the officer, "where you can jail them and ship a new crowd."

The men heard, and saw the workings of the captain's face. Bigpig spoke up.

"I've this to say, sir," he said to the officer, "that we're American citizens and are willing to face any consequences in any American court."

"Are you?" asked the captain, hotly, as he fingered a revolver on the hatch. "Well, you'll face some of the consequences right here aboard this ship; and we won't put into Honolulu, either."

There was a commotion forward. Out of the carpenter-shop came the surgeon and two sailors, and aft on a run. Half-way the surgeon halted and called to the other two. "Keep away from everybody. Get over to leeward." But, blowing their noses and breathing hard, they had joined their mates.

"Small-pox!" yelled the surgeon. "Small-pox—and a bad case from neglect. The man's half dead. Mr. Belknap, this boat's crew must not go back to the cruiser. Four hundred men *must not* be exposed to the infection."

"My Gawd!" exclaimed the captain; "and I thought he was shamming."

The two men who had accompanied the surgeon found themselves deserted; the men from the cruiser scattered and a few crowded among the men of the

ship. "No use," yelled one; "they're all in it." And again they scattered.

"That's right," shouted the surgeon. "Might as well flock together. We're all caught. Any symptoms lying around?" he asked, with a grim smile. "Anybody with chills, headache, pain in the back? Speak up."

A defaced and blemished, woe-begone creature limped up to him and said, hoarsely: "That's just the way I feel, sir. I was second mate here, but he put me 'fore the mast—he did—damn him!"—his voice became a shriek—"and they tied me to him—him. Now, I've got it. I've got it—small-pox!"

They shrank away from him, and he staggered apart and leaned against the rail. Four others stepped up in turn, all complaining of headache, nausea, shivery feelings.

"Peck's first symptoms," muttered the captain. "What a fool I am!"

"Mr. Belknap," said the surgeon, coming close, "there's but one thing to do. Put into Honolulu and quarantine this ship. Medical attention may save most of this crew; otherwise she will never reach San Francisco."

The pale ensign bowed his head. "We will signal for instructions," he said. A display of bunting on both ships finally brought the order: "Proceed to Honolulu. I will accompany."

A month later, Captain Jackson sat by the side of a thin, bright-eyed little man who reclined at full length on his cabin transom—a small skeleton of a man, whose wan face was deeply pitted with little red depressions.

"And didn't you know you had it, Peck?" he asked.

"Never dreamed of it, capt'n. I suppose I caught it on that trip ashore in Shanghai, but, until I lost my senses, thought it was a mild fever. Who caught it from me?"

The captain's face grew grave. "Brown, first," he said. "He went to pieces and died quickly. Every one of the wounded men who bunked in the carpenter-shop went under; their strength wasn't equal to it. How I escaped is a wonder, unless it's because I was vaccinated at New York."

"And the gang?" asked Sinful.

"All showed more or less of the symptoms, but all have recovered, or will recover. None of the cruiser's people caught it, but they are still aboard. The quarantine won't be lifted for a couple of weeks. Dr. Fleming was invaluable; but who do you think spent most time nursing you, Peck?"

"Don't know, captain. Was it you?"

"Tosser Galvin, Poopdeck Cahill, and Bigpig Monahan."

Sinful was silent a few moments, then his face hardened.

"And they spent the most time hazing me," he said, bitterly. "Will you pay them off here, captain?"

"No; I couldn't find a crew to take their places in this pest-ship. They must finish the run to 'Frisco. You will go out first mate."

"And they will have finished the voyage with me."

He closed his eyes, and the faintest of smiles crept over his wasted face.

The captain grinned.

XXXV

AND now they are at sea again—the convalescent crew of the pest-ship, short nine of their number from the terrible scourge that had quarantined them at Honolulu, and from the captain down, with one exception, slow of speech and movement, and unresponsive to anything but mention of home—which magic word alone could bring light to their dead eyes and expression to their faces. The exception was little Sinful Peck, the unsubdued and undaunted, who would smile satanically as he gave orders to brace yards for a head-wind, and was slow to square in when the ship could lay her course. As mate, with a gun in his pocket, he was immune from present criticism and reprisal; and if any conception of future danger—when he and his victims stood on American soil—came to his mind, he carefully concealed it. Clad in a warm overcoat—for the wintry wind blew cold over the Pacific—he stood near the wheel one morning about a week out of Honolulu, and peered intently at the horizon for a moment, then forcefully commanded the man at the wheel—it was Seldom Helward—to "keep her on the course." Seldom answered with a grunt and a sniff, but shifted the spokes; then, as though regretting this slight acquiescence to shipboard etiquette, consigned Sinful to the lower regions in fierce, muttered tones interlarded with profanity. Sinful responded with a sweet smile, and at this moment Captain Jackson joined him.

"Well, Mr. Peck," he said, as he picked up the binoculars that Sinful had just laid down, "if this

wind holds you'll be on the overland route for Cleveland in a week, won't you? Going to take your friends with you?"

"What, captain?—those thirteen plug-uglies? No, sir; they can ship again. We've made good men of them—one of them a passable second mate—and they can easily get berths." He spoke loudly so that the helmsman could hear, and the captain, joining in his mood, answered as loudly:

"And you've saved your ten thousand election bet, and will rake in as much more from the Singapore salvage job. I figured out the probable shares last night—a third to the owners, a third of what's left to me, and the rest to the crew—about ten thousand to each of them."

"To the legitimate crew, you mean, sir. Not one cent can go to the mutineers; and it seems too bad, after their doing all the work." He smiled pityingly at Seldom, who answered only with a scowl.

"Something ahead," remarked the captain, as he peered through the binoculars.

"Yes, sir; I noticed it, but couldn't make it out."

"Try again; your eyes are younger. It seems to change its shape." Sinful took the glasses and looked; then he said: "It's half hidden by that haze—and that haze looks as though it might be fog, or perhaps snow; it's cold enough. It's a ship, or a bark, captain, under topsails. She's wearing. Now she's hidden."

The haze that had enveloped the distant craft soon reached the ship, seeming to kill the westerly air as it came; but after an hour of faint headwind, there came a chill breeze from the north, which cleared the sky. And there, a half-mile to the south, was the strange craft—an iron bark,

with painted ports, stump royal-masts, and other marks of the English build. Her courses were hanging in the buntlines, her topsails set, and all above them furled, with the jib and flying jib, while the spanker was reefed. She was under heavy-weather canvas; but she was not under command—swinging slowly to the breeze—and the lack of all boats, with the backed main-yards, indicated that she was deserted—and deserted in a gale. Yet she stood high out of water, and seemed intact in hull and rigging.

"Get the dory over, Mr. Peck," said the captain, "and visit her. There may be salvage there. Rig the lugsail, and take a couple of men to pull in case the wind fails."

"Yes, sir," answered Sinful, cheerily, "and we've just the crew for salving." He glanced derisively at Seldom, who was now relinquishing the wheel to his relief. Seldom joined the men at the braces, and, when the ship was hove to, assisted at clearing away and lowering the boat—a small craft of the dory type; and it was noticeable that he cursed softly, but furiously, as he worked.

For his own personal safety Sinful chose one of the landsmen, who said he could pull an oar, and Gunner Meagher, the only able seaman aboard whom he dared turn his back upon, for a crew; and with Seldom's muttered injunction, delivered over the rail—"Chuck him overboard, Gunner"—as a godspeed, they shipped the mast, set the lug, and sailed away for the bark. The landsman sat in the bow, Sinful steered, and Gunner sat amidships, his sorrowful eyes fixed upon the cheerful face of Sinful.

"Peck," he said, at last.

"Mr. Peck, if you please," answered Sinful, sternly.

"Peck, I said," responded Gunner, his voice rising and deepening. "I have known you since boyhood as Peck, and Peck you are, and will be. Did you hear what Helward said?"

"I did."

"You know, and he knows, that it would be impossible for me to attempt—"

"You nearly killed one mate with your hands."

Gunner's face flushed slightly, and he said: "I was struck, for the first time in years. I bitterly regretted it, and—"

"You disarmed an officer at another time, and headed a mutiny."

"After that officer shot me while defending you from torture," said Gunner, warmly, more sure of his justification.

"And before I shot another hole in you," said Sinful, dryly.

"I have forgiven you for that, Peck, for I was in the wrong; but it is not of my unfortunate curse of temper that I speak, but of you. Do you know the real animus of Helward's speech—that if you should not finish this voyage with Captain Jackson, no matter by what foul play you were prevented, he could collect from your estate the alternate of the bet, the ten thousand dollars wagered?"

"Yes, Gunner, my son, he could," said Sinful, composedly. "It's all down in black and white, duly witnessed."

"Knowing this, then, and having taken this voyage to save ten thousand dollars, why have you sought our hatred? Why have you made revenge-

[illegible]

"But you dumped the lot of me on the passage out," said Sadie, wisely. "All the rest is mine to spend, Gimmer."

"But who do you stump up at New York? My own good friends, down to see me off—most generous when you dragged me."

Sadie grinned shamefully. "You laughed too much at me, my joker, and you drank more of my good wine than you should, as a minister of the Gospel. You're a good sailor-man, Gimmer, but you're not a bewitching success as a ship-rider. It was a practical joke, and the skipper would have put back and landed you all if you hadn't started a fight the first thing—and put him on his pride."

Gimmer was silent, and after a moment or two Sadie continued:

"I will have you up for it in a few days and have saved for thousand which I could not afford to lose to Satan. I will also have, when the case is settled, ten thousand more, salvage money, which was really earned by my thirteen chests while I slept peacefully in my bunk. For you were passengers at the time and not entitled to salvage. We laughed last that laughs best, Gimmer, my son."

Gimmer's eyes sparkled, he bore back in a vile unpleasant expression, and Sadie watched it like a cat.

"Sometimes, Peck," he said, at last, "I regret having taken holy orders."

"Don't regret it this trip," responded Sinful, quickly, "or I'll drill you full of holes. I consider my life threatened."

No more was said for the present. The cockle-shell of a boat danced down the intervening stretch of sea, and the details of the bark grew plainer. She was painted lead color in the bends, and black on the bulwarks, between which was the white stripe dotted with black squares to represent ports; but the paint, though seemingly fresh laid, was broken up in places by great, rusty patches. As they sailed alongside they saw blisters surrounding these patches, and a warped and wrinkled appearance to the plates.

"She's been afire," said Sinful, to the air, for he was not looking at Gunner; but Gunner answered, brokenly:

"Yes—and, Peck, forgive my implied threat a moment ago. I am a sorely tried man, and a weak one."

Sinful looked at him; there were tears in Gunner's eyes.

"It's all right, Gunner, old man," he said, soberly. "You wouldn't hurt a fly. Shake hands." He extended his hand, which Gunner took. "We're almost home. You and I can be good friends."

XXXVI

THEY sailed around the stern, spelling the name *Hurley Castle, of Liverpool*, in gilt letters, and ranged up on the lee side, making fast to the main-chains. As they climbed to the rail they took their first look to the windward—at the ship they had left. She had braced the yards and was sailing down to leeward to await them: for behind her was a gray bank on the horizon with sure promise of wind.

There was nothing noticeably wrong about the bark's deck, except that ropes were washed off the pins and tangled about, and that a strong, smoky smell pervaded the air. Sinful darted into the cabin, and returned with streaming eyes.

"Pretty smoky in there, Gunner," he said. "Is the deck hot? He stooped and felt with his bare hand. "No, it isn't. Hatches are all battened down, I see, and they've stopped up all possible chinks in the bulkheads below. They've taken the log-book and the ship's papers—at least, I can't find them. There may, or may not, be fire in the hold here; but it's surely going out, for they wouldn't have quit unless things were much hotter. This ship can be saved, but we've no time to lose."

They boarded their boat, and sailed away before the increasing wind to where their ship had again hove to, and in a short time were aboard. As Gunner fastened the boat astern, Sinful reported.

"Had no time to investigate her stores, captain," he said, "but I can draw on you for grub and water if necessary. Give me the thirteen plugs and we'll sail into 'Frisco in company."

"Can you control them alone?"

"I can when awake, and I can trust Gunner as mate. He and I have made up."

"Call 'em aft. Call all hands."

Sinful called all hands, and they came—the thirteen "plugs," the balance of landsmen, the cook, steward, carpenter, and boatswains.

"You thirteen men from Cleveland will get your dunnage ready at once," said the captain, "to go aboard that bark with Mr. Peck to take her into port. When you're ready, help the rest get the boat over. Hurry up, for there's wind coming and there's no time to lose. Bosuns, take the rest o' the men and hoist over one of the forrard boats. Bear a hand, now. There's big salvage there for all of us."

The boatswains answered, and scampered forward with the detail at their heels; but the thirteen men from Cleveland budged not a step.

"Captain Jackson," said Seldom Helward, in his harsh, determined voice, "we've already talked this matter over, and have decided that if there's any salvage earned, we'll earn our share by staying aboard this ship we signed in—same as you and Sinful and the rest did off Singapore."

"What!" shouted the captain. "Do you refuse to obey orders?"

"We do," said Seldom. "We refuse to leave this ship. We can't get home any quicker than by staying right by her now. And, officially, we protest against any depletion of this crew by sending others who may be willing to go. You left Honolulu five men short and are amenable to the law for that neglect. Also, you will lose your insurance if trouble comes in any form. We will see to it."

"You damned sea-lawyer," shrieked the enraged captain, "I couldn't get men to sign in Honolulu—in a small-pox ship. Do a good mind—"

"We don't care for your good mind. We'll work this ship home, and that's all. And I'll remind Mr. Sidni Peck more that by the terms of his wages he is to bear the voyage with you, or sacrifice more than half he'll win by sailing that back. I'm willing he should lose it, and am sorry I didn't stand to it before this, but it's our safety we're considering now. There's a gale coming, and half the present crew can't shorten down. Neither can the other half handle that back."

Before the captain could answer this, Sidni spoke.

"Are you all of one mind? You, Gunner, will you go along?"

"No, Mr. Peck. I prefer staying. That hulk is after me."

"Oh, well," said Sidni, scornfully, "if you're afraid, don't waste other folks. I'll be satisfied with the crowd forward, captain," he added. "Suppose I sound them?"

Gunner looked troubled, but Seldon spoke for him.

"It isn't Gunner, you damned bamboo coolie, that'll cow over a man at the wheel; it's me. Go and get your salvage, and pay me the bet money."

"How about that, Mr. Peck?" asked the captain. "Will you last?"

"No, sir. I finish the voyage under your command, just the same."

The three went forward, and Sidni followed. He talked a while with the others of the crew, then returned.

"They'll go, sir," he said; "they all want a change, and they all need the money. With the seven landsmen, the steward, and the bosuns, I'll have ten men. You have thirteen, and your second mate—Poopdeck Cahill can act mate again—he's a navigator, you know, and any of 'em can cook."

"All right," answered the captain, with his eyes on the storm clouds to windward. "Get your dunnage and note down the ship's position, for if there's no chronometer, and you lose me, you'll have to work by dead reckoning. And take a spare set of signal-flags, for you may not find any. I'll sail the ship up a little, so you won't have a dead beat to windward in the boat—that is, if my crew don't refuse to work at all."

But they did not refuse; when the boat was in the water, manned by the volunteers, and dropped back to the stern beside the dory to wait for Sinful, they braced the yards, and, as the ship forged ahead, clewed up royals and top-gallant sails, hauled down the flying-jib, and sprang aloft to furl. When Sinful appeared with his dunnage, every man of the thirteen but the newly appointed acting mate, Poopdeck Cahill, was in the rigging.

"Peck," said the captain, as he watched the bark, now, with her drift and the ship's motion, slowly drawing away on the weather-quarter, "there's something uncanny about the looks of that craft. There's a little time yet; it won't blow too hard for a couple of hours, and I'm going down to her myself before I send you aboard."

"Why, captain, what's the necessity? I can take her in."

"It's not that, Peck," said the captain, looking down at the little man as father might at a son.

They heard and obeyed, sliding down by backstays and running-gear, the last man getting off the mizzen top-gallant yard just as the squall struck the ship. The three unfurled sails whisked off to leeward in ribbons, the empty ship heeled far over under the impact of the blow, and the flying-jib, baglike at the end of the jib-boom, pulled her head away from the wind.

"Hold your luff, Poopdeck," yelled Sinful, over the noise of wind and sea, "till we're ready to wear."

"Wheel's hard down," answered Poopdeck. "Cut away that flying-jib, and square in now. She won't come to with that wind-bag forrard."

It was no time to dispute conflicting authority, and a man, at Sinful's order, went out and relieved the jib-boom of the thrashing head-sail while the others squared in the cro'-jack yards. By this time the ship was before the wind, rounding to on the other tack, and Sinful, screaming his orders from the port alley, found time to look at the bark. She was nearly abeam, about a mile away before the wind, and under practically the same canvas as was the ship, but going slower, from her deeper draft. And up from her forward end belched a column of smoke.

"She's afire again," he shouted. "Square in fore and main yards, and leave 'em square. Bring the wind quarterly, Poopdeck," he called to the helmsman. "We've got to chase her."

He went aft to the wheel and steadied the ship to a course.

"The damned fools have taken off the forehatch and let the air in," said Poopdeck, as he ground the wheel over. "That's why they're running."

"But they've put it on again," answered Sinful; "there's no more smoke."

This could be seen, also that the bark's foreyards were being braced to starboard.

"They're going to heave her to again," said Poopdeck.

"Right. We'll brace up sharp and keep to windward of her."

"What for?" demanded Poopdeck. "Go to looward and heave to with a light ship. D'you want to drift down upon her?"

"We'll heave to to windward of her," answered Sinful, with sparkling eyes; "and you'll do as I say. I'm in charge here."

"And I'm next in charge by the same authority, with better men than you behind me. Come aft—"

Poopdeck had lifted his voice to hail the men forward, but Sinful's pistol, shoved into his face, silenced the speech.

"Not one word," he said, sharply. "Whatever your position, you'll do as I say. You'll steer this ship till I have you relieved, and you'll steer as I tell you to."

Poopdeck, deadly pale, though probably not through fear, looked calmly into the muzzle and said nothing. Sinful lowered it, and, with a threatening glance over his shoulder, went forward in the alley and ordered yards braced sharply to starboard. The men, unaware of the friction, obeyed willingly, and when Sinful came aft and said, tersely, "By the wind with a good full," Poopdeck answered respectfully and shifted the wheel, but his face was still pale.

The big, light ship tossed over the seas like an egg-shell, making under her topsails fully three

points leeway, but still shaping a course that would take her to windward of the bark, now braced sharp on the same tack. The first violence of the squall had subsided, yet the gale was steadily increasing, and would shortly demand further lessening of canvas; but Sinful, anxiously watching for signs or signals, gave no thought of the weather until the ship had sailed past the bark to a position from which she could not drift down on her. Then he sang out, "Relieve the wheel," and when Gunner Meagher came aft and took the spokes, he said to the humiliated Poopdeck: "Take in the three upper topsails, one at a time, and put a reef in the spanker."

"Ay, ay, sir," answered Poopdeck. "By the wind with a good full, Gunner," he added, to his successor at the wheel; then he pounced upon Sinful and bore him to the deck.

"Damn you," he said. "Threaten me at the wheel, will you?"

Sinful was caught unawares. Struggle as he might, with the powerful Poopdeck's fingers at his throat he was helpless, and soon his pistol left his pocket and went into that of his assailant; then he was dragged, in spite of Gunner's protesting voice, to the lee-quarter bitt and lashed to it, hand and foot, with the end of the spanker-sheet.

"Shut up, Gunner," said Poopdeck, as he arose and went forward. "You're out of this."

He was back before Sinful had recovered power to breathe normally, and he said, dispassionately, to the prostrate little man: "Every man of the crowd decides that the proper thing is to land you on the Farallones, so that you will not finish the voyage either in this ship or with Captain Jackson, and will

in consequence lose your bet. Gunner," he added, to the helmsman, "we're going on to 'Frisco without the skipper. Give her a rapping good full, and get away from that bark."

Gunner answered, and obeyed; the ship paid off and sailed faster. Poopdeck went forward again, and when he had disappeared down the steps Gunner sprang to the taffrail and looked over; then he cast off Sinful's bonds and whispered: "Into the dory with you. She's half full, but bail her out and join the skipper in the bark. God forgive me if I'm wrong." Then he gripped the whirling spokes and ground the wheel up.

With a fervent "Thank you, Gunner," Sinful scrambled over the taffrail and slid down the painter to the boat; then, after assuring himself that she was not too waterlogged to float him, he cut the painter. The ship forged ahead; the boat drifted in the trough; and when a hundred feet separated the two, he heard Gunner's self-saving yell to the rest that the prisoner had escaped. He saw their heads over the rail watching him, but also saw that the three upper topsails were lowered to the caps, and that the ship was not in condition for a pursuit. With his sou'wester he began baling the boat, and when it was fairly free of water he shipped the mast and set the lug with a reef in it.

The bark lay about a half-mile to the west now, heading towards him on the port tack, and heaving to leeward with but little headway. As Sinful watched he saw a string of small flags going aloft to the bark's mizzen peak.

"C.K.P.J.," said Sinful to himself, as he recognized the letters. Not having the code-book with him, he could not read the message; but it was prob-

ably an order or a protest to the big ship skimming away, with yards squared now, to the southward. He looked at her as he steered, but there was no answering signal. When again he looked at the bark she was swinging off before the wind; she was pursuing the ship.

XXXVIII

HAD she remained hove to, Sinful's little craft, close hauled on the opposite tack, would have intercepted her in ten minutes, or at least have drawn near enough to be seen; but in running before that growing gale it stood as little chance of catching the bigger bark as did the bark of catching the still bigger and lighter ship. However, Sinful squared away to a nearly parallel course, and occasionally, at the risk of capsizing, hauled aft his sheet in the hope that larger showing of the sail would make it visible; but no sign came from the bark, and she slowly drew ahead, while the ship far in the van grew small on the horizon.

In an hour the bark was a couple of miles away, and Sinful was steering in her wake, his only hope now being that the increasing gale would force Captain Jackson to again heave to; but such a contingency would bring added menace to the boat, for how could she ride a sea that would threaten a big bark? Occasionally a comber climbed over the stern and gave him work at baling. The spin-drift pelted him, and, wet to the skin and chilled to the bone, he welcomed the exercise.

The day wore on; the sky overhead darkened, and he could barely see through the smudge a dim spot

ahead, after which he was steering. His arms ached with the jerking of the tiller and the labor of baling with a limp sou'wester. Hunger assailed him, and, drenched though he was, thirst added its torment. Every breaking sea was a fresh enemy seeking his life, and the wind, rushing past him, purred a dismal song of hatred on the vibrating leech of his sail.

The dim spot ahead grew dimmer with the darkening of the sky above. Every third sea flooded his boat. The singing fragment of sail could not drive his cockle-shell fast enough to escape them. He would give up the pursuit, for his strength was leaving him. He would bind the oars together with unlaid strands of the stern-fast, and make a sea-anchor with the halyards for a cable—for the painter was cut away—and ride out the gale, bows to the sea.

He prepared his oars, and was watching for an easy sea on which to round to, when a sudden glare of light drew his glance ahead. He really saw but the last of it—a fading, dimming effulgence, which left blacker darkness. Then up against the gale came a dull, thunder-like sound, which for a fraction of a second bellied his sail back against the pressure of the wind. The bark had blown up. The smoldering fire, revived by the admission of air through the opened forelatch, had reached an explosive part of her cargo—powder, or dynamite. This he reasoned out in a supreme effort of benumbed faculties, and the ultimate conclusion was that he himself, by his hurry, his bravado, and cupidity, had arranged the death of eleven human beings, one of whom was his friend—the captain that had taken his place for love of him.

He had no particular right to live. He would go

on, and if he chanced to find a man afloat, he would give him the chance of life which he possessed—the possibility that the men of his town had seen the explosion and would try to beat back. For they were merciful men; they had been merciful to him, whom they hated.

Baling, and steering by the pressure of the wind, changing hands at the tiller as the pain of fatigue compelled him, half crazed with the horror of the present and past, he went on in the darkness, and in three hours was among wreckage, some of which he ran into. He sang out; then realizing that he must not get too far to leeward, rounded to on the top of a sea, lowered his sail, and threw out the oars at the end of the halyards. Baling hard, for the boat had nearly filled, he called at intervals, and in time was answered by a voice.

"Help!" it said. "Help! Where are you? I can't see."

It came from astern, and he hailed again. The answering accents were recognizable. It was the captain's voice. He pulled in his sea-anchor and drifted down, hailing the while, until his boat struck a white wheel-box cover on which was a groaning, wheezing man. Throwing out the sea-anchor again, he pulled him in and laid him, limp and helpless, in the stern-sheets.

"Are you hurt badly, captain?" he asked. "What happened? I saw the explosion."

"Is it you, Peck? Is it you? Where are the rest? Where is the ship?"

"Twenty miles to looward by this time. They took charge again, and meant to land me on the Farallones, but I got away in the dory. Been chasing you all day. Where are you hurt?"

"I'm stone blind, Peck. My eyes are burned out. Oh, my God, what pain! And my back is broken. I can feel nothing below the middle. There was fire in the hold, and powder, I suppose."

"The boys'll beat back, captain. They won't leave us here. I know them."

"No, they will not, Peck. It'll make no difference to me. I won't last many hours. I'm thinking now of you. They can't beat a light ship to windward in a blow. It'll be three days at least before they could get here. I'll be dead—you half starved. Go on to the east. You'll be picked up. The closer to 'Frisco the more craft you will meet. You can win your bet if you finish the voyage with me, dead."

"I'm not thinking of that now, captain," said Sinful, brokenly.

"Think of it—keep thinking of it. You are poor, I know, or you would not have shipped 'fore the mast to save paying your bet in cash. The Singapore salvage will be settled in Liverpool, where that steamer belonged. You will be the only man alive entitled to it. Apply for it. The English consul at Singapore has all the documents. But, above all, Peck—win your bet."

Sinful did not answer for a time, then he asked: "Were there any others besides yourself, captain? Did you hear any calls?"

"Not one. I had the wheel while all hands were at the weather main-brace amidships. They were all killed instantly, and I was blown overboard. Go on to the east, Peck. Take my body into 'Frisco. Finish the voyage with me, as I order you. It is my last order as your captain. Win your bet."

And it was his last word. He died in an hour,

yet, in Sinful's unquiet mind, he spoke often during the long night while the boat rode at the sea-anchor. He would rise and stand erect, pointing to the east, and uttering the order: "*Finish the voyage with me. Win your bet.*"

With the coming of daylight he spoke no more, and Sinful dragged him forward, pulled in the oars, and set the storm-reefed lug to the gale. There was neither sail nor smoke on the gray waste of heaving sea, and, alone with the dead and his thoughts, he sailed towards the rising sun. All day he sailed and starved and thirsted, and, as darkness came down, listened again to the dead man's admonishing. After a while he answered and argued, questioning irritably, and presenting strong reasons for pulling out the bottom plug as the best solution of the problem. This the dead man would not agree to. Ever was his concluding command: "*Finish the voyage with me. Win your bet.*"

On the morning following the second night Sinful's hair had turned gray, and he had become garrulous, doing most of the talking, and only at long intervals answering the commands of the dead man. On the third night, however, they were more sociable. The captain sat beside him and helped him steer, and in oft-repeated sentences impressed him with the wisdom of his plan—to finish the voyage, and to win the bet.

In the morning Sinful was converted to the captain's way of thinking, and the captain had ceased to admonish. He lay quiet in the bows, with his head raised on a thwart, and his gray eyes fixed upon Sinful's face with an approving stare. But Sinful's concessions came forth in shrieks. He screamed and yelped his earnest intention to finish

the voyage with Captain Jackson—to win his bet and save the money that he needed. And his hair was white, and his face the face of a death's-head.

XXXIX

A FORE-AND-AFT rigged vessel of any size will, when close-hauled on the wind, in smooth water, head within four points, or forty-five degrees, of it. A square-rigged vessel will only head within six points, or about sixty-seven degrees, of the wind. Leeway, or side slip, is the same in both types—about a half-point in a whole sail breeze, with speed at the maximum; and it increases as sail is shortened in a storm, until, with but a rag showing to keep her head to the sea, and speed reduced to nothing, the leeway is the only motion possessed by the vessel. It is a side, or quarterly, drift, added to by the heave of the sea; and this form of motion is reached sooner in a light ship than in one loaded, or ballasted, to her bearings—also, when reached, is faster by reason of the greater surface exposed to the wind and the lesser hold on the water. Thus it was that Sinful Peck's little boat, fore-and-aft rigged and ballasted to a proportionate load-line by her dead and living crew, could make in that northerly blow a course over the bottom of about east by north, while the big, empty ship, high out of water and with her propelling surface of canvas reduced to main spencer and lower mizzen topsail, which just sufficed to keep her out of the trough, was thrown by wind and sea in a southerly direction at the rate of one hundred miles or

more a day. For, though the runaway crew had braced sharp on seeing the explosion, and thrown the ship nearly on her beam-ends in the effort to beat back, they were soon forced to shorten down—to think of the ship and themselves.

But there were bad consciences among them—twelve of them, not counting that of the innocent though grieving Gunner; and before the gale blew out they had damned themselves, individually and collectively, as fools, thieves, murderers, pirates, mutineers, sons of guns, and sons of sea-cooks; but nothing availed to settle their minds—to remove from the situation the fact that they had disobeyed the captain's signal and run away from a distressed ship seeking assistance. This was what they had done, even though the signal "C.K.P.J."—an order to heave to—had flown until out of sight, unsupplemented by explanations of danger from fire. Though originally shanghaied, and deeply wronged by the captain and Sinful Peck, yet they were now signed sailors of the ship, criminally disobedient and revengeful, whose animosity towards Sinful had forced him into an open boat in a gale which surely had drowned him before he could reach the bark, and whose disobedience of legitimate orders had resulted in the death of eleven others. Thus they condemned themselves, and not until the ship was beating back under whole sail, with a new flying-jib, did they come down to practical consideration of the future. The shortage of crew prior to their leaving Honolulu was known to the authorities, but what explanation could be given at San Francisco for the loss of the captain, the mate, the steward, the two boatswains, and seven of the crew? They discussed it noisily, profanely, yet sincerely, while they

smoked their pipes on the weather side of the poop.

Many suggestions were advanced. To swear solemnly that the missing ones were washed overboard in the gale was abandoned because of the bad reputations they had earned in their voyage round the world; to scuttle, fire, or beach the ship, land in the boats, with a tale of shipwreck and death, and later to indemnify the owners, was overruled by some who saw no reason for destroying a ship just to pay for her, leaving the point at issue—their constructive manslaughter—unprotected. To tell the truth about the matter in all but their disobedience of the signal, stating that the bark had blown up before they had taken charge, seemed a plausible solution of the difficulty, and met unanimous approval; but against this was the possibility that survivors rescued by other craft would rise up to refute them; and even now they were beating back to pick up any possible survivors that they could find. The absence of the captain and first mate at the same time could be accounted for by openly admitting the murder of Sinful—an onus that Seldom avowed his willingness to bear alone; but this was vetoed by the conscientious Gunner Meagher, who emerged from the cabin companion in time to hear it.

"I tell you," he declaimed, vehemently, "that I will be a party to no lying. I will not accuse myself and the rest of you to the authorities, but if questioned I will tell the truth. And, Seldom," he said, to the cross-grained old fellow, "you are unjust in your hatred of Peck. He was a good, forgiving man. Listen to this, which I found among his effects." He showed them a folded piece of paper, then read:

"Know all men by these presents that I, James Corland Peck, of Cleveland, of the State of Ohio, for and in consideration of value received, the receipt of which is hereby confessed, do hereby grant, bargain, remise, convey, release, and quit-claim unto the men known as Seldom Helward, Bigpig Monahan, Poopdeck Cahill, Gunner Meagher, Tosser Galvin, Shiner O'Toole, Jump Black, Sorry Welch, Ghost O'Brien, General Lannigan, Moccassey Gill, Turkey Twain, and Yampaw Gallegher of Cleveland, of the State of Ohio, at this date serving as seamen on board the American ship ———, of New York, all the right, title, interest, claim, or demand whatsoever I may have acquired in, through, or by any construction of maritime law, in the salvage of money from the English steamer ———, wrecked on a reef of the St. Esprit Islands on the twentieth day of June, 1898, which money is reputed to be of the amount of four hundred thousand dollars.

"Witness my hand and seal, this twenty-fifth day of July, A.D. 1898.

"JAMES CORLAND PECK."

"The day we came aboard in Singapore," exclaimed Poopdeck.

"What's it amount to, anyhow?" said Seldom. "No one here'll put in a claim for that salvage, I'll warrant."

"But, Seldom," said Gunner, gently—"of course not. We cannot court investigation. Yet, now that in all probability Sinful is dead, will you still remain unforgiving? Will you demand that money from his widow because death prevents him from finishing the voyage?"

"Will I?" growled Seldom. "You can bet your

bottom dollar I will. Why shouldn't I? He's had every chance, and has never weakened." He glared around at the group, but found little of approval in the sober faces of the others.

There was no further discussion of future complications. They sailed north, watching for wreckage, and finding no sign of survivors after a three days' cruise in the vicinity of the spot where the bark blew up, shaped a course for San Francisco, and reached soundings at the beginning of a howling gale from the southwest.

Knowing the danger of a lee shore to an empty ship, Poopdeck put her on the port tack, under all the sail that she would carry, to await a landfall, or some index of his position; but it was not until night had fallen and the three top-gallant sails had gone to ribbons that he made out far to the northward the twinkle of a flashing white light.

"Southeast Farallone, sure enough," he said to Seldom, who had the wheel. "Now there's no use bending new to'-gallant sails for a thirty-mile run dead 'fore the wind. Wha' do you think?"

"Think?" said Seldom. "Why, if a man can make the Buffalo breakwater he ought to hit the Golden Gate. Any pilot or tug-boats out in this, d'ye think?"

"Hardly tugs, and I wouldn't back yards in this for a pilot. It's dead easy. The light-ship isn't more than twenty miles in from us. We can pick it up in a couple of hours. Let's see what the rest say."

He called a council at the mizzen hatch and stated the case. A northeasterly course would soon show them the light-ship, from which a northeast three-quarters east magnetic course would take

them straight in past Fort Point Light. The rest was easy; they could drop anchor off the city and be in their bunks before midnight.

"And in jail before breakfast," broke in one.

"We'll consider that next," continued Poopdeck. "I've been thinking about it. Now, as for the other plan. It's orthodox and ship-shape on salt water to keep off a lee shore in a blow and make port in a slant wind; and if Jackson was here he'd wait until this blows out and risk piling up on the beach. But we have a lee shore all round us on the Lakes, and are used to hitting a hole in the wall, so, even with this square-rigged ballahoo, I think we can sneak in. The barometer's way down, and it's blowing harder every minute. What do you think? Take it off my shoulders."

They willingly, and noisily, took it on their own. What was the use of drifting sideways into port when they could sail in head first? What did salt-water skippers know, anyhow? Who wanted to pound up and down all night with the best harbor in the world dead under the lee? They would square in the yards when Seldom put the wheel up.

XL

"ALL right; but hold on," said Poopdeck, in a voice strangely harsh for him; and, as he stood in the light streaming from the forward companion, there seemed a rigid enlargement of his figure—a stiffening of the joints, and a menacing hunch to his shoulders. "We will retrospect a little. We left Cleveland nearly a year ago, fourteen strong. One of us we ostracized and banished from fellowship, leaving but thirteen—an unlucky number. We have been unlucky—very unlucky—and it is well that we change our number before our last play in the game. The fourteenth man is dead, and cannot join us; but we can get rid of another, and make it twelve. Gunner Meagher, stand forth."

"What!" exclaimed Gunner.

"Stand forth, Terrence Meagher," thundered Poopdeck, drawing a pistol and leveling it at the amazed Gunner, "or I'll send you unprepared to your God." Gunner stepped forward. "Make your peace with Him in the short time left you. Moccassey Gill and Tosser Galvin, hold him tight. Bigpig Monahan, you make a hangman's noose in the end of the lee inner main buntline, and you, Sorry Welch, go aloft and overhaul the bight down to the deck."

The thought behind Poopdeck's words may or may not have lain dormant in the minds of all. Certain it is, however, nine men out of ten will do as they are told, if told suddenly and sharply, and the alacrity with which Tosser and Moccassey

seized and throttled the much-beloved Gunner, and with which Bigpig sprang to the buntline and Sorry to the rigging, would have gratified a more exacting second mate than Poopdeck. The rest yelled approval, and one of them found a remembered slush-bucket under the main fife-rail and greased the noose which Bigpig made.

"What do you mean—what—let go! Boys, what would you do?" stuttered Gunner, as they rushed him forward.

"Run him up," roared Poopdeck, following with the pistol. "Damn an informer, anyhow—to hell with a man that'll give away his friends. Put it 'round his neck, boys—knot under the left ear so as to break his neck at once. Up with him now; bowse him aloft and leave him there."

The greased noose silenced further protest from Gunner. They manned the bight of the buntline, hooked it into a stanchion sheave when they had slack enough, and lifted Gunner from the deck; he swung over the rail—for the ship was heeling to the storm—and then went aloft in lessening curves, up—up—slowly and jerkily to the yard. But they had not bound his hands, and these hands gripped the rope above the noose, which Poopdeck now seemed to notice.

"Lower him down," he shouted. "Lower him down and tie his hands behind his back. He's holding his weight. We must break his neck and be done with him."

Down came Gunner, landing in a sprawl on the deck; then, tearing the noose from his neck, he arose, the berserk strong within him, and struck right and left with his fists while he growled and snarled incoherently; but the powerful Bigpig, Tosser, and

Moccassey bore him to the deck and pinioned him until others had brought spun-yarn to bind him; then, still struggling, he was bound, haltered, and lifted again. But before he had gone three feet upward the watchful Poopdeck ordered him down, as the knot was improperly adjusted. Gunner lay quiet where they landed him, and Poopdeck loosened the stricture on his throat. Gunner began to breathe in hoarse sobs.

"I don't know," said Poopdeck, standing up. "What's the use of bothering? Why not run him up and let him strangle?"

"Mercy!" groaned the prostrate man. "Mercy—have mercy upon me!"

The berserk was gone from him.

"What!" answered Poopdeck, derisively; "mercy upon you, who would have no mercy upon us—who would inform upon us because we unwittingly were responsible for the loss of those men?"

"I would not! I will not! I swear I will not! Don't murder me!"

"Might as well make sure," replied Poopdeck, sternly. "We have twelve to our debit now. Might as well make it thirteen."

"Don't, I beg of you! I have done you no harm. I will do you no harm."

"Will you remember that, though to looward of the bark when she blew up, we had not squared away?"

"Yes, yes—I will. I promise."

"Will you remember that Sinful fell overboard in the gale about the same time?"

"Yes, yes."

"Let him up. Square in the main-yards."

Gunner arose, slipped the noose from his neck,

and unsteadily followed the men to the weather main-brace, while Poopdeck went aft to the wheel.

"Let her swing off dead before the wind, Seldom," he said.

"Dead before the wind it is," answered Seldom, heaving on the spokes. "What's up, Poopdeck? What the hell you laughing at?"

"At Gunner," said Poopdeck, as he glanced, first into the binnacle, then aloft at the fly at the mizzen truck. "Steady her at nor'east by north for a while."

With a full crew, Poopdeck would have squared in the after-yards at the same time as he did the main; but with just men enough to man one set of braces it was the part of wisdom to leave the canvas on the mizzen to balance that on the fore until the ship was before the wind. Yet the best of seamanship is futile in the face of rotten canvas. The full pressure of the gale, impinging squarely on the braced mizzen topsails as the ship paid off, was more than they could stand; a rent appeared in the lower near the weather clew, then one in the upper at the reef-band, and before Seldom had steadied the ship they were both in ribbons.

"Well," remarked Poopdeck, philosophically, to Seldom, "it saves furling them, and we won't need them again. We've still got the fore and main."

But a yell from the men forward called him to the break of the poop, and he saw the two foretop sails leaving the yards in scattering pieces.

"Good enough," he shouted. "We can scud under the foresail and maintop sails. Square in fore and cro'-jack yards just the same."

They did so, took in the spanker and two outer jibs without orders—for these men needed little

supervision among themselves—and as the royals, the main-sail, and the cro'-jack had been furled before the top-gallant sails blew away, the big ship rode along over the seas under the canvas named by Poopdeck—a good rig for scudding, but a poor one under other conditions.

XLI

AND other conditions arose. They picked up the light-ship sooner than Poopdeck had predicted, and went by it in a screaming squall that flattened the seas to a level surface of froth. Then, with Point Bonita and Fort Point lights plainly visible to mark their course into port, and lesser lights along the coast twinkling a welcome, the squall blew out, and the ship tossed and rolled and groaned on a cross sea that threatened to wrench planks from timbers. Poopdeck ran below, looked at the barometer, and, coming up hurriedly, called Seldom, who had been relieved from the wheel, and Bigpig Monahan aft on the poop.

"Now you two fellows," he said, "have spent your lives at this business, while I've been out of it for years. The glass is 'way down. I want advice. It's the eye of the storm, no doubt, and it isn't a big, wide one, vicious as it is, or we wouldn't have reached the center so soon. Lord knows which way it's traveling, or where the wind will come from when it hits us again. If it's off the land we can blow out to sea, but if it's from any other direction we'll hit the coast somewhere; we're in a shallow bay."

"And there's not much time to bend new topsails," said Bigpig; "and we couldn't claw off a lee shore if he had 'em bent—and to'-gallant sails, too. What water is there under us?"

"About thirteen fathom, sand bottom, according to the chart, and a five-fathom bar just ahead of us."

"Anchors," put in Seldom. "Wasn't the wind hauling to the southward before it left us?"

"A little—not much."

"A little's enough. We'll get it to the norrard o' west. There's no use monkeying with canvas. If we can't make port we'll beach her."

Seldom was right. It came directly out of the northwest with a force that split the foresail and the upper maintop sail, and banished all chance of saving the ship by her canvas. Yet they braced the main-yards to starboard, set the spencer and spanker —which, with the lower maintop sail, was all the ship could stagger under—and, heading north-northeast, made the effort to creep in; but slowly and surely the lights drifted up from the lee bow to the weather bow, and, with the twinkling coast-lights but five miles away, they lifted the anchors over the bows and saw that the patent windlass was in order and the chain free in the lockers. An hour later, in twelve fathoms of water, they let go both anchors, furled the canvas, and waited. It was midnight—when they had hoped to be in their bunks, safe in the best harbor in the world.

The cables led out from the hawse-pipes rigid as iron bars, and the ship rolled and reared, plunged into the on-coming seas and shook them off as she lifted, tugging at her cables as a frightened saddle-horse tugs at the reins which fasten him; and along these rigid chains came the jerky vibration which

tells of dragging anchors. Clustered at the windlass, sheltered from the blast by the break of the top-gallant forecastle, the crew sensed these vibrations through the deck and the soles of their feet for a while; then, knowing to a man that if the screaming wind and heaving sea continued for long, nothing but a miracle could keep the ship from the beach, they moved aft in a body to where Poopdeck stood on the quarter, gauging the drift with a hand-lead. The lead-line stretched forward.

"We're driving ashore stern foremost about three miles an hour," roared Poopdeck, over the noise of the gale. "Look here. We're not two miles from the beach." He pointed to leeward, where the shore-lights had grown in number and brilliancy.

"Well," answered Seldom, after a searching look into the blackness ahead and to starboard, "there's no sign of a tug, and I don't mean to drown at the end of a chain. Let's slip and beach her, broadside on. If she hits bottom with the chains out she'll go to pieces right in that spot."

They chorused approval and raced forward. The inner ends of both chains were hitched around the heels of the windlass bitts, and, in view of possible slipping of cables, they had not paid out the whole length, reserving a fathom or two of each chain for slack in the loosening of the hitches. Also had they left the strain on the windlass instead of slacking the chain into the stoppers at the hawse-pipes, as is done when a ship is permanently moored. The men who went below with lanterns, however, found a little too much chain in the lockers—it lay too heavily on the hitches—and, climbing out, they sent the word upward to "pay out handsomely about eight feet of each chain." Bigpig and Sel-

dom climbed the forecastle steps, and, with heads bowed to the horizontal pelting of rain and spindrift, bore down on the levers and unhooked them. The strain of the chains now lay on the two freely turning "wild-cats," or sprocketed wheels, held by friction bands, the levers of which were in the hands of two men.

It was the fault of no one. Bigpig and Seldom were strong, intelligent men who understood patent windlasses, and lesser men than they could have performed the task they had essayed; but no strength, intelligence, or forethought could have availed against the impact of the unexpected green sea which the big, high ship spooned up as easily as though she were loaded to her bearings. It washed the two men away from the levers and over the break of the forecastle to the deck below; the levers flew up, the freed wild-cats spun within the loosened friction bands, and the chains rattled out the hawse-pipes until a crashing jar below decks apprised the men that the ends had brought up. With much bad language they descended and investigated; the ends of both chains had slid up the bitts and the hitches were jammed against the chain-pipes in the deck. They rushed up, locked and manned the windlass, but a short struggle with the brakes failing to gain them a link of slack, they gave it up and searched the carpenter-shop for steel saws, but found nothing that would touch those two-inch links. They went below and packed their bags.

Then they thought of the two boats left, and cleared them away; but on the advice of Poopdeck, who told them of a life-saving station three miles to the northward, and on their own second thought, they decided not to launch them in a sea against

which they could not heave in chain, and sent up rockets instead; but long before a flare-light on the beach had apprised them that they were seen, the vibrations of the chains had merged into the quivering of the huge fabric as the stern took the bottom. The first blow twisted the rudder, and the spinning wheel, bringing up with a jerk, sailed high in air, taking the wheel-box and part of its mechanism with it. The next finished the rudder and brought down the fore and mizzen top-gallant masts, the latter falling overboard, the former landing squarely across the waiting boats and smashing them. It was the beginning of the end. With the strain off the cables, the ship lay bows nearly to the seas, and, dragging no more, went to pieces as Seldom had predicted. The stern went first, disintegrating plank by plank, timber by timber. The masts fell one by one; the split and twisted deck sank in a slant towards the shore; and they mustered under the shelter of the top-gallant forecastle, where they ruined every ax aboard trying to sever the chains, until, flooded out by the sea as the ship's bottom ground away, they climbed to the top of it with their dunnage. And on this platform, awash with the water, they lashed themselves and clung, drenched, bruised, and miserable, until the eastern sky lightened with the coming of day.

"She picked a hard spot," said Poopdeck, standing up to look between two seas. "No sand bottom'd tear a ship to pieces like this. It's rocks, and they're not charted. We're nearly a mile off the beach, boys; that's why the life-savers couldn't work. We'll have to wait till they can launch their boat."

"They'd better hurry up," said Seldom, in his voice which no peril nor pleasure could change.

"We won't last long here," put in Gunner, gloomily. "It's the judgment of Providence."

"It's the number thirteen, Gunner," answered Poopdeck. "The incident's not closed. Dry up, or there'll be twelve of us for better luck."

"Good thing we didn't try our boats," said Bigpig, as he hove his long frame erect. "Look at that surf, and look at those combers coming in." He pointed to windward, where the horizon was marked by the foaming crest of a mile-long sea.

They all stood up, stretching their cramped limbs and looking about.

"Something else coming in," said one, as he stared to windward. "It dropped behind that first sea."

They watched where he pointed, straight out; and when the long comber subsided to make way for the next, there appeared on its face a boat under a rag of sail, which seemed to slide stern first up the glassy slope and disappear in the foam of the sea crest; but as the foam grew less the rag of canvas was seen for an instant before it sank in the hollow behind. The next sea brought it plainer to view—a boat under a storm-reefed lug, with a man in the stern; and as it drew nearer with each sea they saw in the gathering light that this man's hair was white, and his face the face of a death's-head.

XLII

"IT'S the dory!" yelled Gunner, as he slung to the capstan and ducked his head to a wall of water that crashed over the wreck; then, looking again, he repeated: "It's the dory, and, before God in heaven, it's Peck!"

"The hell you say!" said Seldom, from the jib-sheet pins, to which the sea had washed him. "Sinful, is it? Sure enough. Sinful's luck. It never went back on him. Port a bit, you little devil—port!" he called. "Steady-y-y-y-y!"

A maniac shriek came down the wind, and the white-haired little man stood erect and gesticulated. They saw his emaciated face, seamed and strained with the emotions of his disordered brain, and his eyes, gleaming with an unfamiliar light.

"He's dotty," said Poopdeck. "Stand by to catch him. Clear away that running gear, Seldom."

Two more seas brought him close, and they called to him words of encouragement and welcome, which he answered in screams—inarticulate and unintelligible; then a third sea lifted the dory high, and, crashing over the wrecked top-gallant forecastle, brought the little craft with it, throwing it sidewise as it landed among them, overturning it and spilling out Sinful, who struck head first against the cathead and lay quiet, and a thing indescribable, which wormed and squirmed and twisted its way about with seeming life until the next sea washed it away, to sink like a stone among the wreckage.

But the same sea took the dory, and Sinful, too;

and, sick with horror, they let him go, to join the thing he had brought to them; and he would assuredly have joined it had not one man nerved himself to action. It was Seldom Helward, his implacable enemy, who, with the end of a long jib downhaul knotted around him, sprang into the sea and swam towards the small figure barely afloat to leeward. He reached it just in time, sang out, "Haul in," and was pulled with his burden to the arms of his fellows.

"Is he dead?" they asked.

"Don't know," answered Seldom, as he clung weakly to Bigpig's legs. "He got a bad rap on the head, and he must be full o' water. I'm full. Jolt it out of him."

On that water-washed platform, with death menacing them all, they labored over the inanimate Sinful, applying the methods used in the resuscitation of the drowned, supplemented by kindly but profane objurgations which but poorly expressed their emotions. The bitterness was gone from their hearts, and they forgot the long list of defeats at the hands of this mocking practical joker, seeing and knowing nothing but that he lay in their hands, helpless, conquered, aged, and emaciated—possibly dead, but insane when conscious.

Yet there was no maniac glare in the eyes that finally opened and looked at them, nor was there anything abnormal in the voice that huskily inquired: "What the hell's the matter?"

They answered him joyously, but he had relapsed, and they supported his head clear of the rushing seas until he again opened his eyes; then he asked—not for water, not for food, but for the captain.

"Was that the skipper, Sinful?" asked Bigpig. "Well, he's dead, and washed overboard."

He was still for a few moments, then said: "I can't remember. What happened? I was in the dory, and the bark blew up. I found the captain; but—I don't remember. Where are we now?"

"Peck," interposed Gunner, who was supporting Sinful's head, "the ship is wrecked on the Californian coast. We're all here on the forecastle, waiting for the life-savers. You just came down on us in the dory with the dead skipper. You were crazy. Do you remember being tied to the quarter bitt when the bark blew up? You went out of your head then, and got clear and jumped into the dory. You must have found the skipper, for you brought him with you, dead."

"Yes, I found him; he was alive then, and burned, and blind, with his back broken," said Sinful in a stronger voice. "But what made me crazy? I'm not in the habit of it."

The touch of humor was painful, but they laughed as they answered:

"Too much for you, Sinful. The skipper was your only friend. He took your place in the bark, and you went daft when she blew up. That's all there is to it."

"I suppose so. How long ago was that?"

"About a week, Sinful. You've been a week in an open boat with a dead man. You've been crazy for a week, and have just come around—struck your head against the cathead as you boarded us."

"Struck my head"—he felt of it—"and it brought me to my senses. I always feared it. I must look out."

"Feared what, Sinful?"

"Varicose veins. Exposure, fatigue, trouble of mind aggravate them. Blood-clots form and drift to the brain. Lucky I struck my head and jarred it away."

"Well, you're all right now, Sinful," said Seldom, "and you've won your bet. I consider that you've finished the voyage; for we're on the coast, within the three-mile limit, and this mile of surf don't matter."

Sinful looked at him with something of the old, quizzical expression.

"Seldom," he said, "I cabled my partner from Singapore to pay that money to your wife, and he answered that he had her receipt."

They all looked at Seldom, who did not meet their glances. Then one said: "And you signed over your salvage claim to us, Sinful. We found the paper. Why was that?"

"Because you earned it. I did not. But I played the game out. Yes, I played the game, and I've had lots of fun, boys." He closed his eyes with a smile.

"And did you know, Peck," said Gunner, "that you slipped overboard after striking your head, and would have drowned but that Seldom swam after you? He saved your life, Peck."

Sinful's eyes opened, and the smile left his face. He reached out his hand to Seldom, and the grouchy old fellow gripped it, while a shamed smile came to his own rugged countenance.

"Wreck a-hoy-oy-oy!" came a ringing hail down the wind. "Stand by!"

They looked to windward. A turtle-ended lifeboat was there, with eight cork-jacketed men at the oars. The helmsman, erect at the steering oar, had

uttered the hail; the bowman was casting overboard a heavy kedge anchor.

"We will be saved, after all," said Gunner, brokenly. "It is the goodness of God."

"Maybe, Gunner," said Poopdeck, slapping him on the back. "You're a brick, and it's a good thing we didn't hang you, isn't it? For Sinful would have made up the unlucky number again."

THE END